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# Miniature lives of the saints, ed. by H.S. Bowden



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**Imprimatur.**

**HENRICUS EDUARDUS,**  
*Card. Archiep. Westmon.*





Tu gloria Jerusalem, tu lætitia Israel, tu honorificentia populi nostri.—Judith xv.

MINIATURE  
LIVES OF THE SAINTS  
FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

EDITED BY  
HENRY SEELYE AND JOHN  
WILKINSON.

THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS VOLUME WAS  
PUBLISHED BY THE REV. JOHN SEELYE, D.D.,  
IN 1827.

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THE REV. JOHN SEELYE, D.D.

LONDON: BURNS AND GATES.  
1877.





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FOR  
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EDITED BY  
HENRY SEBASTIAN BOWDEN,  
OF THE ORATORY.

'Ut non segnes efficiamini, verum imitatores eorum qui  
fide et patientia hereditabunt promissiones.'—*Heb. vi. 12.*

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July 1.

## S. Isidore of Madrid.

ISIDORE was born of poor parents, at Madrid, in the twelfth century, and gained his livelihood as a ploughman. He never learned to read or write, but sanctified himself by his daily toil, according to the law God gave Adam at the fall. Most of his nights were spent in prayer, and his first act in the morning was to attend Mass. His fellow-servants accused him of neglecting his work for this purpose. When his master went to the field to see the truth, he found two angels working by the side of Isidore, to compensate for the time he had given to God. He had no fear but of sin, and committed all his cares to God with marvellous simplicity. Hearing in church that his ass was in danger from a wolf, he answered, 'God's will be done;' and with perfect composure continued his prayers to the end. When he reached the spot, his ass was feeding in safety, and the wolf lay dead by its side. He constantly divided his food with the poor. Once, when all had been given away, another poor man appeared. Isidore begged his wife for God's sake to find him some soup; and on looking into the vessel she found it miraculously refilled. Isidore never had but the one master, who learned by long experience his real worth, and made him steward of his whole property. He died A.D. 1170, and is honoured as the patron Saint of Madrid.

## Simple Faith.

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S. Isidore became a Saint because he preferred prayer with God to conversation with men, and because he trusted rather the Divine power and goodness than any human aid.

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‘The stability of our faith comes not from the acuteness of our understanding, but from the simplicity of our adhesion to the promises of God.’—*S. Augustine.*

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One hot summer’s day, when the whole country was parched and the rivers were dry, Isidore’s master came up to him in the field where he was ploughing, and asked him where he could find some water to drink. The Saint pointed to a neighbouring hill. His master went to the spot, but soon returned, disappointed and enraged. Then Isidore took him to the same place, which indeed showed no sign of a spring; but the Saint made the sign of the Cross on the dry ground, and, piercing the surface with his goad, there gushed forth a miraculous fountain, which flows to this day, and is blessed with healing virtue.

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‘Trust in the Lord, and do good, and inhabit the land, and thou shalt be fed with its riches.’—Ps. xxxvi. 3.

July 2.  
**S. Sisoës, Hermit.**

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SISOES spent seventy years in the Egyptian desert. His sanctity led numbers to consult him, and the virtue he recommended above all others was humility. A solitary saying, 'My father, I always consider myself as standing before God,' Sisoës answered, 'That is not much, my son. Better were it didst thou look upon thyself as below all creatures.' Another said : 'If a barbarian tried to murder me, should I kill him if I could?' 'By no means,' he answered ; 'commit thyself to God, and believe all evil happens to thee for thy sins by the just judgment of God, whose providence is righteous and cannot err.' Sisoës was as gentle as he was humble. He never reprovèd the brethren, but patiently aided them to rise again after their falls. One whom he had often helped said to him, 'Father, how many times do you allow me to rise again after I have fallen?' 'Do so,' he answered, 'till death finds you either fallen or risen again.' At his death the face of Sisoës grew radiant, and he said : 'Behold, Abbot Antony is here.' A little later he said : 'The choir of Prophets are come;' and he added, 'Behold, also the choir of Apostles.' When asked with whom he conversed, he said : 'The angels are come to fetch me, but I am begging them to leave me a little longer to do penance, for I have not yet begun.' And with his face shining as the sun, he said, 'Behold the Lord,' and expired.

## Self-abasement.

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There are few of us who would like to face our friends, were we obliged to carry hung round about our necks the catalogue of our past sins. Yet we know that the judgment men would then form of us would be a correct one, while the respect and friendship they now show us are based only on their ignorance of our true selves. This thought will help us to imitate the humility for which S. Sisoës was distinguished.

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‘Hold thyself in low esteem, renounce the pleasures of the senses, detach thyself from the vain cares of this world, and thou shalt gain true peace of heart.’—*S. Sisoës*.

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Some solitaries once asked S. Sisoës to say to them a few words of edification. Out of humility he excused himself, and leaving them to confer with his disciple, withdrew into the interior of his cavern. Overhearing some praise of himself, he called out from within : ‘No, I am only a glutton, who eats without rule and without necessity.’ And the brethren, who well knew the austerity of his life, went away more edified by his humility than they could have been by the holiest discourse.

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‘In humility let each esteem others better than themselves.’—*Philip. ii. 3.*

## July 3. S. Pachomius, Abbot.

IN the beginning of the fourth century great levies of troops were made throughout Egypt for the service of the Roman emperor. Among the recruits was Pachomius, a young heathen, then in his twenty-first year. On his way down the Nile he passed a village, whose inhabitants gave him food and money. Marvelling at this kindness, Pachomius was told they were Christians, and hoped for a reward in the life to come. He then prayed God to show him the truth, and promised to devote his life to His service. On being discharged, he returned to a Christian village in Egypt, where he was instructed and baptized. Instead of going home he sought Palemon, an aged solitary, to learn from him a perfect life, and with great joy embraced the most severe austerities. Their food was bread and water, once a day in summer and once in two days in winter; sometimes they added herbs, but mixed ashes with them. They only slept one hour each night, and this short repose Pachomius took sitting upright without support. Three times God revealed to him that he was to found a religious Order at Tabenna; and an angel gave him a rule of life. Trusting in God he built a monastery, although he had no disciples; but vast multitudes soon flocked to him, and he trained them in perfect detachment from creatures and from self. His visions and miracles were innumerable, and he read all hearts. His holy death occurred in 348.

## Sincere Humility.

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‘To live in great simplicity,’ said S. Pachomius, ‘and in a wise ignorance, is exceeding wise.’

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‘Most men look for miracles as a sign of sanctity ; but I prefer a solid and heartfelt humility to raising the dead.’—*S. Pachomius.*

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One day a monk, by dint of great exertions, contrived to make two mats instead of the one which was the usual daily task, and set them both out in front of his cell, that Pachomius might see how diligent he had been. But the Saint, perceiving the vainglory which had prompted the act, said : ‘This brother has taken a great deal of pains from morning till night to give his work to the devil.’ Then, to cure him of his delusion, Pachomius imposed on him as a penance to keep his cell for five months and to taste no food but bread and water.

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‘Take heed, therefore, that you do not your justice before men to be seen by them ; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven.’—Matt. vi. 1.

July 4.

## **B. Columba of Rieti.**

FROM infancy Columba led a supernatural life. She strewed her little bed with thorns, and from an old sieve plaited a hair-shirt. At ten she made a vow of virginity, and when her parents tried to change her resolve, and chose a husband for her, she proved her determination by cutting off her hair and casting it at their feet. The Holy Eucharist formed her one desire and almost her sole nourishment. Hunger, thirst, sleep, and the other needs of nature, not only never tormented her, but she lived unconscious of them. At nineteen she entered the Third Order of S. Dominic, though continuing to dwell in her father's house. Being warned in sleep to leave Rieti, she one night found herself, how she knew not, travelling on an unknown road. She finally stopped at Perugia, in which she recognized the city of her dream. The inhabitants received her as a Saint, and built for her the convent of S. Catherine, in which she gathered under one roof all the Tertiary nuns. When a great plague was raging, she offered herself as a victim, and the plague was stayed ; but Columba was struck down by the scourge. She only recovered to find herself assailed by the vilest calumnies, and treated as an impostor. Alexander VI. ordered an inquiry. Nor was it till after many trials, and being deposed from her office of prioress, that her innocence was proved. She died in 1501, at the age of thirty-three.



## Desire of frequent Communion.

Do not say, 'I am not worthy to go often to Communion;' but endure everything to make yourself more worthy. This is the lesson of B. Columba's life.

*'Siti sitiri Deus,*—God thirsts to be thirsted for.'—*S. Gregory Nyssen.*

If the Saint's Communion was delayed by but one hour she fainted from exhaustion, and her life seemed in danger. Her confessor, fearing some delusion, asked her how she was able to live on the Blessed Sacrament alone. 'When I receive this heavenly food,' she replied, 'I feel so satisfied in soul and body that all desire for earthly food vanishes, and I have a horror of it. I hope that before this year is over God will give you a sign which will remove your doubts.' On Christmas-day, as this priest finished his first Mass, he felt an unknown refreshment of soul. When he had said his third Mass this heavenly love had reached such a height that he felt it impossible to touch food, and so remained fasting through the day. This was revealed to Columba, who said, 'I rejoice, father, that you have received my heavenly food, and now know by experience how I can be satisfied by the Bread of angels only.'

'As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.'  
—Ps. xli. 1.

## July 5. **S. Peter of Luxemburg.**

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PETER of Luxemburg, descended both by his father and mother from the noblest families in Europe, was born in Lorraine in the year 1369. When but a schoolboy, twelve years of age, he came over to London as a hostage for his brother, the Count of S. Pol, who had been taken prisoner. The English were so won by Peter's holy example that they released him at the end of the year, taking his word for the ransom. Richard II. now invited him to remain at the English court ; but Peter returned to Paris, determined to have no master but Christ. At the early age of fifteen he was appointed, on account of his prudence and sanctity, Bishop of Metz, and made his public entry into his see barefoot and riding an ass. He governed his diocese with all the zeal and prudence of maturity, and divided his revenues into three parts—for the Church, the poor, and his household. His charities often left him personally destitute, and he had but twenty pence left when he died. Created Cardinal of S. George, his austerities in the midst of a court were so severe that he was ordered to moderate them. Peter replied, 'I shall always be an unprofitable servant, but I can at least obey.' Ten months after his promotion he fell sick of a fever, and lingered for some time in a sinking condition, his holiness increasing as he drew near his end. He died A. D. 1387, aged eighteen years.

## Earnest Self-denial.

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S. Peter teaches us how by self-denial, rank, riches, the highest dignities, and all this world can give, may serve to make a Saint.

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‘Contempt of the world ! contempt of thyself ! Rejoice in thy own contempt, but despise no other person.’—*Words of S. Bernard, inscribed on S. Peter’s portrait at Autun.*

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S. Peter, it was believed, never stained his soul by mortal sin ; yet, as he grew in grace, his holy hatred of self became more and more intense. At length, when he had received the last Sacraments, he forced his attendants each in turn to scourge him for his faults, and then lay silent till he died. But God was pleased to glorify His servant. Among other miracles is the following. On July 5th, 1432, a child about twelve years old was killed by falling from a high tower in the palace of Avignon upon a sharp rock. The father, distracted with grief, picked up the scattered pieces of the skull and brains, and carried them in a sack with the mutilated body of his son to S. Peter’s shrine, and with many tears besought the Saint’s intercession. After a while the child returned to life, and was placed upon the altar for all to witness. In honour of this miracle, the city of Avignon chose S. Peter as its patron Saint.

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‘If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’—Matt. xvi. 24.

## July 6.

### **S. Ubald, Bishop.**

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AT an early age Ubald turned his back on a brilliant future, and entered the Order of Canons Regular. Finding his own community relaxed, he withdrew for a while to a house of strict observance, whence he came back to re-establish the discipline of his monastery. In 1128, being chosen Bishop of Gubbio, his native place, he redoubled the severity of his life. His habitual self-denial was rewarded by an apparent insensibility to insults or affronts. On one occasion a workman, whom he reproved, pushed him into a heap of mortar, covering him with dirt. Ubald rose without uttering one word of complaint, and even delivered his assailant from the prosecution which the townsfolk set up. When the man, won by this clemency, offered the bishop any reparation, Ubald only demanded of him the kiss of peace. Knowing the blessings of this holy peace, he faced every danger to preserve it in his flock, and proved himself as brave as he was gentle. When a riot arose in the town, and he saw that his entreaties were of no avail, he threw himself between the combatants, regardless of their drawn swords and of the falling stones, and fell to the ground as if wounded. The rioters at once cast down their weapons, believing him slain. But the Saint, rising up, thanked God that the tumult was stayed. During his last years he bore with perfect cheerfulness a most painful disease, and at length passed to peace eternal, A. D. 1160.

## Conquest of Human Respect.

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In the court or the camp B. Laurence was always a simple Capuchin ; his habit and his crucifix were the secret of his success. Let our faith also be proved in word and work ; and the world, which we fear, will be under our feet.

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‘He only who lives by faith, by faith overcomes the world.’—*S. Bernard.*

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The German leaders, when marching against the Turks, insisted on B. Laurence accompanying them, for they believed that his presence would insure victory ; and so it was. For when the Christians saw that the Turks outnumbered them by four to one, they turned to retreat ; but Laurence, burning with a holy fortitude, persuaded them to risk a battle. Riding through the ranks, he bade all invoke the Holy Name of Jesus, and fear nothing. Then, with no arms save the crucifix in his hand, he himself led the charge against the enemy. The Turkish ranks melted before the furious onslaught and divine war-cry of the Christians. The few, who fell on the German side, were infidels, who had refused to utter the Holy Name.

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‘For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.’—Rom. i. 16.

July 8.

## **S. Elizabeth of Portugal.**

ELIZABETH was born in 1271. She was daughter of Pedro III. of Arragon, being named after her aunt, S. Elizabeth of Hungary. At twelve years of age she was given in marriage to Denis, King of Portugal, and from a holy child became a saintly wife. She daily heard Mass and recited the Divine Office, but her devotions were arranged with such prudence that they interfered with no duty of her state. She prepared for her frequent Communion by severe austerities, fasting thrice a week, and by heroic works of charity. She was several times called on to make peace between her husband and her son Alphonso, who had taken up arms against him. Her husband tried her much, both by his unfounded jealousy and by his infidelity to herself. But God made known her innocence by a miracle; and her patience, and the wonderful sweetness with which she even cherished the children of her rivals, completely won him from his evil ways, and he became a devoted husband and a truly Christian king. She built many charitable institutions and religious houses, among others a convent of Poor Clares. After her husband's death she wished to enter their Order; but being dissuaded by her people, who could not do without her, she took the habit of the Third Order of S. Francis, and spent the rest of her life in redoubled austerities and almsgiving. She died at the age of sixty-five, while in the act of making peace between her children.

## Daily Mass.

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In the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, S. Elizabeth daily found strength to bear with sweetness suspicion and cruelty ; and by that same Holy Sacrifice her innocence was proved. What succour do we forfeit by neglect of daily Mass !

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‘But thou, when thou seest the priest offering the Sacrifice, consider not the priest who is ministering, but the hand of God invisibly outstretched.’  
—*S. John Chrysostom.*

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A slander affecting Elizabeth and one of her pages made the king determine to slay him ; and he told a lime-burner to cast into his kiln the first page who should arrive with a royal message. On the day fixed the page was sent ; but the boy, who was in the habit of hearing Mass daily, stopped on his way to do so. The king, in suspense, sent a second page, the very originator of the calumny, who, coming first to the kiln, was at once cast into the furnace and burnt. Shortly after, the first page arrived from the church, and took back to the king the lime-burner’s reply that his orders had been fulfilled. Thus hearing Mass saved the page’s life, proved the queen’s innocence, and wrought the king’s conversion.

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‘Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that afflict me.’—Ps. xxii. 5.

## July 9. The Martyrs of Gorcum.

IN 1572, during the Dutch War of Independence, the fortress of Gorcum was surrendered to the insurgents under the express stipulation that its occupants should have their freedom. No sooner, however, was the town in the hands of the Protestants than the Catholic clergy were cast into prison. The holy company consisted of eleven Franciscan Recollects, two of whom were lay-brothers, one Augustinian, one Dominican, two Premonstratensians, and four secular priests. The Friday following, though faint with hunger, they refused the meat offered them, and were therefore subjected to torments and insults of every kind. Some of them were over sixty, and one ninety years of age. Twice they were brought to the foot of the gallows, in the hope that the fear of death might induce some at least to apostatize ; but their enemies knew not how God perfects His strength in man's weakness. Bleeding and half naked as they were, the old men did but rejoice the more in their tribulation, singing hymns of praise to Christ and His Mother. When artifices and threats had alike been used in vain, the final sentence was executed. Not even then was the fury of the soldiers satisfied. Mutilating the bodies as they hung, they cut off the noses, ears, and other members ; then binding them to their hats, they returned in triumph to the city. The martyrs were canonized by Pope Pius IX.



## Observance of the Precepts of the Church.

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Faith and obedience are the conditions of eternal life. The holy martyrs obtained their crowns not only because they believed, but because they proved their faith by obedience.

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‘Obedience alone plants in the soul the other virtues, and guards them when they are planted.’  
—*S. Gregory.*

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The Church allows meat to be eaten on Friday when it is necessary for health or life. But the martyrs refused it because it was offered them by apostates in contempt of religion, and because, had they eaten of it, the act would have been taken as a denial of their faith, and as a triumph therefore of the heretics. One only of the prisoners, in spite of the warning of his companions, ate the forbidden food, and, though he underwent some torments afterwards, he did not complete the course of his passion, and failed to win his crown.

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‘If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.’—*Matt. xix. 17.*

## July 10. S. Peter Celestine.

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As a child Peter had visions of our Blessed Lady and of the angels and saints. They encouraged him in his prayer, and chided him when he fell into any fault. His mother, though only a poor widow, put him to school, feeling sure that he would one day be a saint. He made great progress in study, but still longed for the heavenly favours of his childhood, and at the age of twenty left his home in Apulia to live in a mountain solitude. Here he passed three years, assaulted by the evil spirits and beset with temptations of the flesh, but consoled by angels' visits. After this, his seclusion was invaded by disciples, who refused to be sent away; and the rule of life which he gave them formed the foundation of the Celestine Order. Angels assisted in the church which Peter built; unseen bells rang peals of surpassing sweetness, and heavenly music filled the sanctuary, when he offered the Holy Sacrifice. Suddenly he found himself torn from his loved solitude by his election to the Papal throne. Resistance was of no avail. He took the name of Celestine, to remind him of the heaven he was leaving and for which he sighed, and was consecrated at Aquila. After a reign of four months Peter summoned the cardinals to his presence, and solemnly resigned his trust. So strange an act was regarded with suspicion; he was placed in confinement, and thus alone with God he joyfully awaited his death, which took place A. D. 1296.

## Holy Solitude.

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‘Whoso,’ says the *Imitation*, ‘withdraweth himself from acquaintances and friends, to him will God draw near with His holy angels.’

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‘To speak heart to heart with God you must love to be with Him alone ; for he who delights in the society of the great will never hear His voice.’—*S. Peter Celestine*.

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S. Peter, when Pope, built himself a boarded cell in his palace, and there continued his hermit’s life ; and when, lest his simplicity might be taken advantage of to distract the peace of the Church, he was put under guard, he said, ‘I desired nothing but a cell, and a cell they have given me.’ There he enjoyed his former loving intimacy with the saints and angels, and sang the Divine praises almost continually. At length, on Whit-Sunday, he told his guards he should die within the week, and immediately fell ill. He received the last Sacraments ; and the following Saturday, as he finished the concluding verse of Lauds, ‘Let every spirit bless the Lord!’ he closed his eyes to this world and opened them to the vision of God.

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‘I will lead her into the wilderness, and there I will speak to her heart.’—*Osee ii. 14.*

## July 11. S. Aldhelm, Bishop.

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S. ALDHELM was born about the year 635, of the family of the West Saxon kings. In his boyhood he was sent for instruction to Abbot Adrian of Canterbury. He received the monastic habit from Maidulf, a holy hermit, who had established a monastery in a place since called Malmesbury, in Wiltshire, of which Aldhelm became the first abbot. During the thirty years of his rule the abbey increased wonderfully in numbers, in learning, and in sanctity ; and the holy abbot himself acquired a wide-spread reputation for his knowledge of languages, his writings, his purity of life, and his stern practices of asceticism. Like so many English Saints, he made a pilgrimage to Rome.

Then, to rekindle his charity and quicken his faith, he founded the church and monastery of S. John the Baptist in Frome, another at Bradford, and also the abbey of Barking, near London, of which his sister was first abbess. At seventy years of age he was made bishop of the new see of Sherborne, which was afterwards translated to Salisbury. By his writings, exhortations, and unwearied exertions, he overcame the obstinacy of the Welsh bishops, and induced them to conform to the Roman practice of celebrating Easter. He died, after a five years' episcopate, in the year 709, and was buried at Malmesbury, where his shrine became famous for many miracles.

## Good Use of Talents.

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The greatest intellectual gifts, and their use and cultivation, need be no obstacle to perfection. On the contrary, as the gifts of God, they should be consecrated to His service, and so will not only promote our own sanctification, but also that of others. S. Aldhelm was perhaps the most learned and accomplished man of his time ; yet he was a Saint, and the father of many holy men and women.

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‘ Read frequently ; pray earnestly. If you labour to acquire secular learning, do so with the intention of becoming better able to understand and explain the law of God.’—*S. Aldhelm to his friend Ethelwald.*

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The people of Malmesbury were addicted to certain sinful amusements, of which singing and music were the principal charm. S. Aldhelm used to take his seat, in the dress of a minstrel, on a bridge by which they had to pass, and there sing certain pleasing songs of his own composition, which so attracted the people that they stopped in crowds to listen ; by degrees he skillfully introduced pious subjects, and finally induced them to follow him to the church.

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‘ All things are yours ; but you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.’—1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

## July 12. S. John Gualbert.

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S. JOHN GUALBERT was born at Florence A.D. 999. Following the profession of arms at that troubled period, he became involved in a blood-feud with a near relation. One Good Friday, as he was riding into Florence accompanied by armed men, he encountered his enemy in a place where neither could avoid the other. John would have slain him ; but his adversary, who was totally unprepared to fight, fell upon his knees with his arms stretched out in the form of a cross, and implored him, for the sake of our Lord's holy Passion, to spare his life. Grace triumphed, and John not only held his hand from blood, but cast out from his heart the wicked spirit of revenge. A humble and changed man, he entered the church of S. Miniato, which was near ; and whilst he prayed the figure of our crucified Lord before which he was kneeling bowed its head towards him, as if to ratify his pardon. Abandoning the world, he gave himself up to prayer and penance in the Benedictine Order. Later he was led to found the Congregation called of Vallombrosa, from the shady valley a few miles from Florence, where he established his first monastery. He fought manfully against simony, and in many ways promoted the interests of the Faith in Italy. After a life of great austerity, he died whilst the angels were singing round his bed, July 12th, 1073.

## **Forgiveness of Enemies.**

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The heroic act which merited for S. John Gualbert his conversion was the forgiveness of his enemy. Let us imitate him in this virtue, resolving never to revenge ourselves in deed, in word, or in thought.

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S. John Gualbert said to his enemy, 'I cannot refuse what you ask in Christ's name. I grant you your life, and I give you my friendship. Pray that God may forgive me my sin.'

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Once the enemies of the Saint came to his convent of S. Salvi, plundered it, and set fire to it; and having treated the monks with ignominy, beat them and wounded them. S. John rejoiced. 'Now,' he said, 'you are true monks. Would that I myself had had the honour of being with you when the soldiers came, that I might have had a share in the glory of your crowns?'

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'To no man rendering evil for evil.'—Romans xii. 17.

July 13.  
**B. Ippolito Galantini.**

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**B. IPPOLITO** was born in Florence A.D. 1565. As a child he attracted other children to him, and taught them the words of eternal life. Already he longed to leave the world and serve God in religion. But this was not to be. He was the son of a poor silkweaver, and had to work all day to the end of his life. God sent him continually most grievous sicknesses, which at last reduced him to penury. Before the foundation of his own institute he was placed at the head of seven confraternities, and driven from each by the ingratitude or malice of its members. Holy and learned men were set against him, and publicly denounced his labours. After this preparation his life's work began—the foundation of the Congregation of Christian Doctrine. This was an institute for the instruction of the young on all festivals. Ippolito laid down rules for his children much like those which S. Philip Neri was framing for his brothers of the Oratory in Rome. The Congregation changed the face of Florence; and Ippolito was sent for by many towns to establish his institute in their midst. Still his persecutions never ceased. An attempt was even made on his life; and he was accused of heresy to the Holy Office. But the servant of God prevailed, and his work was established. He died A.D. 1619. In 1824 the Saint's institute was re-examined, and again solemnly approved by Leo XII.



## Instructing the Ignorant.

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B. Ippolito was a working man, poor, sickly, and uneducated. Yet he prepared the young for the Sacraments and the sick for death ; and was called by Leo XI. the 'Apostle of Florence.' God has given us more of this world's goods ; what are we doing for the instruction of those souls for which He died ?

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'Let our one endeavour be to instruct the tender minds of our children in virtue and the fear of God, and let all other things take a second place.'—*S. John Chrysostom.*

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B. Ippolito laboured only to remove that ignorance which is the cause of sin, and he never lost an opportunity of enlightening a soul. The inn-keeper at Siena with whom he was staying was leading a profligate life. Ippolito spoke to him of the hideousness of his vice, and notwithstanding the man's violent abuse, ended by attaining his conversion. Some youths whom he had reformed in the streets for immodest language fell upon him with their sticks and left him half dead, but the servant of God only rejoiced to suffer for the honour of God, and he was often known to spend sixteen consecutive hours in instructing an ignorant or obstinate sinner.

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'They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity.'—Daniel xii. 3.

July 14.  
**S. Bonaventure.**

SANCTITY and learning raised Bonaventure to the Church's highest honours, and from a child he was the companion of Saints. Yet at heart he was ever the poor Franciscan friar, and practised and taught humility and mortification. S. Francis gave him his name ; for, having miraculously cured him of a mortal sickness, he prophetically exclaimed of the child, 'O bona ventura—good luck!' He is known also as the 'Seraphic Doctor,' from the fervour of divine love which breathes in his writings. He was the friend of S. Thomas Aquinas, who asked him one day whence he drew his great learning. He replied by pointing to his crucifix. At another time S. Thomas found him in ecstasy while writing the life of S. Francis, and exclaimed, 'Let us leave a Saint to write of a Saint.' They received the doctor's cap together. He was the guest and adviser of S. Louis, and the director of S. Isabella, the king's sister. At the age of thirty-five he was made general of his Order ; and only escaped another dignity, the archbishopric of York, by dint of tears and entreaties. Gregory X. appointed him Cardinal Bishop of Albano, and he sat at that Pontiff's right hand, and spoke first at the Council of Lyons. His piety and eloquence won over the Greeks to Catholic union, and then his strength failed. He died while the Council was sitting, and was buried by the assembled bishops, A. D. 1274.

## Disregard of Honours.

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‘The fear of God,’ says S. Bonaventure, ‘forbids a man to give his heart to transitory things, which are the true seeds of sin.’

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‘Pride makes a man almost insane, for it teaches him to despise what is most precious, grace and glory, and to esteem what is most vile, vanity and ambition.’—*S. Bonaventure.*

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When the Saint heard of the Pope’s resolve to create him a cardinal, he quietly made his escape from Italy. But Gregory sent him a summons to return to Rome. On his way he stopped to rest himself at a convent of his Order near Florence ; and there two Papal messengers, sent to meet him with the cardinal’s hat, found him washing the dishes. The Saint desired them to hang the hat on a bush that was near, as his hands were dirty, and take a walk in the garden until he had finished what he was about. Then taking up the hat with unfeigned sorrow, he joined the messengers, and paid them the respect due to their character.

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‘Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth.’—Coloss. iii. 2.

## July 15. S. Swithin, Bishop.

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SWITHIN was born of noble parents, and at an early age became a monk at Winchester. There, we are told, he devoted himself to God so manfully and humbly, that he became a pattern of every virtue. King Egbert made him his chaplain, and intrusted to him the education of his son Ethelwolf, the father of Alfred the Great. When Ethelwolf became king S. Swithin was made Bishop of Winchester and adviser to the king in all matters pertaining to the Church. We trace his influence in the laws about tithes, in the exemption of the Church from civil taxes, in the institution of Peter's pence, and in the provision that every ten families should maintain one poor person. As bishop he was noted for a manly firmness and vigilance, and for humility and mortification of self. His tender sympathy with the poor was even more remarkable than his profuse almsgiving. He died A.D. 862, and was, by his own order, buried at the door of the church, that all who entered might trample on his grave. One hundred years afterwards his relics were translated into the restored cathedral; his hand, the instrument of so great charity, was found incorrupt, and innumerable miracles of healing were wrought at his shrine. In 1379 William of Wickham, Chancellor of England, and a devoted client of the Saint, built the nave and front of the existing cathedral.

## Pity for the Poor.

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The smart of poverty, says a spiritual writer, is allayed even more by one word of true sympathy than by the alms we give. Alms coldly and harshly given irritate rather than soothe. Even when we cannot give, words of kindness are as a precious balm ; and when we can give, they are the salt and seasoning of our alms.

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‘The poor of Christ are as a fruitful soil ; the harvest is speedy and abundant.’—*S. Augustine.*

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As an instance of the Saint’s care for the poor, even in the smallest things, it is related that, when he was building a bridge at Winchester, some of the workmen insulted a poor woman who passed by, and in mischief broke the eggs she was carrying for sale. She complained to S. Swithin of the insult and wrong ; and the Saint, touched with compassion, took from her the basket in which the broken eggs were, made the sign of the Cross over it, and gave it back to her with the eggs whole as before.

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‘The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I comforted the heart of the widow.’—*Job xxix. 13.*

July 16.

**S. Simon Stock.**

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SIMON was born in the county of Kent, and left his home when he was but twelve years of age to live as a hermit in the hollow trunk of a tree, whence he was known as Simon of the Stock. Here he passed twenty years in penance and prayer, and learnt from our Lady that he was to join an Order not then known in England. He waited in patience till the White Friars came, and then entered the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel. His great holiness moved his brethren in the general chapter held at Aylesford, near Rochester, in 1245, to choose him prior-general of the Order. In the many persecutions raised against the new religious, Simon went with filial confidence to the Blessed Mother of God. As he knelt in prayer in the White Friars' convent at Cambridge on July 16th, 1251, she appeared before him, and presented him with the scapular in assurance of her protection. The devotion to the blessed habit spread quickly throughout the Christian world. Pope after Pope enriched it with indulgences, and miracles innumerable put their seal upon its efficacy. The first of them was worked at Winchester on a man dying in despair, who at once asked for the Sacraments when the scapular was laid upon him by S. Simon Stock. The Saint died at Bordeaux A. D. 1265.

## Devotion to the Scapular.

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To enjoy the privileges of the scapular, it is sufficient that it be received lawfully and worn devoutly. How, then, can any one fail to profit by a devotion so easy, so simple, and so wonderfully blessed ?

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‘Behold the sign of salvation, a safeguard in danger, the covenant of peace and everlasting alliance !’—*Revelation of our Lady to S. Simon Stock in giving him the scapular.*

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In the year 1636 M. de Guge, a cornet in a cavalry regiment, was mortally wounded at the engagement of Tehin, a bullet having lodged near his heart. He was then in a state of grievous sin, but had time left him to make his confession, and with his own hands wrote his last testament. When this was done the surgeon probed his wound, and the bullet was found to have driven his scapular into his heart. On its being withdrawn he presently expired, making profound acts of gratitude to the Blessed Virgin, who had prolonged his life miraculously, and thus preserved him from eternal death.

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‘He that shall overcome shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.’  
—Apoc. iii. 5.

July 17.  
**S. Alexius.**

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**S. ALEXIUS** was the only son of parents preeminent among the Roman nobles for wealth, birth, and virtue. On his wedding-night, by God's special inspiration, he secretly quitted Rome, and journeying to Edessa in the far East, gave away all that he had brought with him, content thenceforth to live on alms at the gate of our Lady's Church in that city. After seventeen years, when his sanctity was miraculously manifested by the Blessed Virgin's image, he once more sought obscurity by flight. On his way to Tarsus contrary winds drove his ship to Rome. There no one recognised in the wan and tattered mendicant the heir of Rome's noblest house; not even his sorrowing parents, who had vainly sent throughout the world in search of him. From his father's charity he begged a mean corner of his palace as a shelter, and the leavings of his table as food. Thus he spent seventeen years, bearing patiently the mockery and ill-usage of his own slaves, and witnessing daily the inconsolable grief of his spouse and parents. At last, when death had ended this cruel martyrdom, they learned too late, from a writing in his own hand, who it was that they had unknowingly sheltered. God bore testimony to His servant's sanctity by many miracles. He died early in the fifth century.



## Detachment from Natural Affections.

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We must always be ready to sacrifice our dearest and best natural affections in obedience to the call of our Heavenly Father. 'Call none your father upon earth, for one is your Father in heaven' (Matt. xxiii. 9). Our Lord has taught us this not by words only, but by His own example and by that of His saints.

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'O God, who hast made Blessed Alexius, Thy confessor, wonderful in his contempt for the world: grant, we beseech Thee, that, by the help of his intercession, Thy faithful ones may despise earthly things and ever aspire after heavenly things. Amen.'—*Breviary*.

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It came to pass that the servants of S. Alexius, whom his father sent in search of him, arrived at Edessa, and seeing him among the poor at the gate of our Lady's Church, gave him an alms, not recognising him. Whereupon the man of God, rejoicing, said: 'I thank Thee, O Lord, who hast called me and granted that I should receive for Thy name's sake an alms from my own slaves. Deign to fulfil in me the work Thou hast begun.'

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'Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them: How is it that you sought Me? Knew ye not that I must be about My Father's business?'—Luke ii. 47, 48.

July 18.

## **S. Symphorosa and her Sons.**

IN the year 119 the Emperor Hadrian consecrated his great palace at Tivoli, and sought an oracle from the demons whom he worshipped as his gods. They would give none till Symphorosa and her seven sons ceased to insult them by their Christian faith, and consented to offer sacrifice.

Symphorosa was brought before the emperor, who tried to win her by smooth words. She told him boldly that her husband and her husband's brother had held high command in the imperial army. Both had confessed Jesus Christ, and had died deaths shameful in the eyes of men, but full of glory in the sight of Christ and His angels. Symphorosa had but one desire—to share in their confession, and to join them in heavenly glory. Her courage did not fail when her face was blackened with blows, and she was hung up by the hair of the head. At last she was drowned in the Tiber, and her sons followed her one by one. They were hoisted on seven single stakes, planted round the temple of Hercules, and were there tortured and stretched till their bones were disjoined; at last, as they yielded nothing under the torment, they were singly put to death. The Christians gathered up their relics, venerated them with religious honour, and inscribed their names on the tombs under which they had been laid. For they knew that Christ had set their names in the Book of Life, and written them there in characters of light.

## Suffering for Christ.

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When we despise worldly honours, and listen to the voice of faith rather than the maxims of carnal wisdom, Christ rewards the sacrifice which we make for Him. But He rewards us in His mercy for a sacrifice which is nothing in itself. Your true glory consists in following Christ and proving yourself the child of the Saints.

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‘Suffer with Christ and for Christ if you would reign with Christ.’—*Imitation*.

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Hadrian threatened to burn Symphorosa alive in sacrifice to his gods. She told him this was beyond his power. If she was burnt alive, she would be offered up as a victim, not to the demons, but to Christ the Son of God, and the fire which consumed her body would increase her crown and the confusion of the devils. So it is with every trial which can assail us ; come whence it may, it is a means of consecrating ourselves anew to Christ, and working an eternal weight of glory.

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‘But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness, but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.’—1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

## July 19.

### S. Vincent of Paul.

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S. VINCENT was born A.D. 1576. In after years, when adviser of the Queen and oracle of the Church in France, he loved to recount how, in his youth, he had guarded his father's pigs. Soon after his ordination, he was captured by corsairs, and carried into Barbary. He converted his renegade master, and escaped with him to France. Appointed chaplain-general of the galleys of France, his tender charity brought hope into those prisons where hitherto despair had reigned. A mother mourned her imprisoned son. Vincent put on his chains and took his place at the oar, and gave him to his mother. His charity embraced the poor, young and old, provinces desolated by civil war, Christians enslaved by the Infidel. The poor man ignorant and degraded was to him the image of Him who became as 'a leper and no man.' 'Turn the medal,' he said, 'and you then will see Jesus Christ.' He went through the streets of Paris at night, seeking the children who were left there to die. Once robbers rushed upon him, thinking he carried a treasure, but when he opened his cloak, they recognised him and his burden, and fell at his feet. The Society of S. Vincent, the Priests of the Mission, and 25,000 Sisters of Charity still comfort the afflicted with the charity of S. Vincent of Paul. He died A.D. 1660.

## Tenderness to the Poor.

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Most people who profess piety ask advice of directors about their prayers and spiritual exercises. Few inquire whether they are not in danger of damnation from neglect of works of charity.

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‘Those who love the poor in life shall have no fear of death.’—*S. Vincent of Paul.*

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Not only was S. Vincent the saviour of the poor, but also of the rich, for he taught them to do works of mercy. Like S. Philip, he knew the power of association. He made them do good in the sight of others to spread the sacred contagion of charity. When the work for the foundlings was in danger of failing from want of funds, he assembled the ladies of the Association of Charity. He bade his most fervent daughters be present to give the spur to the others. Then he said: ‘Compassion and charity have made you adopt these little creatures as your children. You have been their mothers according to grace, when their own mothers abandoned them. Cease to be their mothers, that you may become their judges; their life and death is in your hands. I shall now take your votes: it is time to pronounce sentence.’ The tears of the assembly was his only answer, and the work was continued.

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‘Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.’—*S. Matt. xxv. 40.*

July 20.

**S. Jerome Emiliani.**

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**S. JEROME EMILIANI** was a member of one of the patrician families of Venice, and, like many other Saints, in early life a soldier. He was appointed governor of a fortress among the mountains of Treviso, and whilst bravely defending his post was made prisoner by the enemy. In the misery of his dungeon he invoked the great Mother of God, and promised if she would set him free to lead a new and a better life. Our Lady appeared, broke his fetters, and led him forth through the midst of his enemies. At Treviso he hung up his chains at her altar, dedicated himself to her service, and on reaching his home at Venice, devoted himself to a life of active charity. His special love was for the deserted orphan children whom, in the times of the plague and famine, he found wandering in the streets. He took them home, clothed and fed them, and taught them the Christian truths. From Venice he passed to Padua and Verona, and in a few years had founded orphanages through Northern Italy. Some pious clerics and laymen, who had been his fellow-workers, fixed their abode in one of these establishments, and devoted themselves to the cause of education. The Saint drew up for them a rule of life, and thus was founded the Congregation, which still exists, of the Clerks Regular of Somascha. S. Jerome died February 8th, 1537, of an illness which he had caught in visiting the sick.

## Love of Christ's Little Ones.

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Let us learn from S. Jerome to exert ourselves in behalf of the many hundred children whose souls are perishing around us for want of some one to show them the way to heaven.

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‘We are bound to plead for children, since they cannot speak for themselves, and to labour that they be not deprived of the grace of Christ, which they cannot by their own efforts obtain.’—*S. Augustine.*

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S. Jerome's orphans assembled each morning for Mass and twice daily for catechism. The work-hours, in which they were trained for some special trade, were relieved by litanies, hymns, rosaries, and reading aloud. While washing their hands before meals they recited the *Miserere* for the Holy Souls. They confessed monthly, and on great feasts went in procession, clothed in white, singing litanies, to some principal church. The sight of their innocence and piety effected numerous conversions, and the Saint used to say that whenever he wanted any special grace from God, he would make four of his orphans under eight years of age pray for it, and that he had never yet been refused what they had thus asked for.

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‘The ear that heard me blessed me, and the eye that saw me gave witness to me, because I had delivered the poor man that cried out, and the fatherless that had no helper.’—Job xxix. 11, 12.

## July 21. **S. Cyril, Martyr.**

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S. CYRIL suffered while still a boy at Cæsarea in Cappadocia during the persecutions of the third century. He used to repeat the name of Christ at all times, and confessed that the mere utterance of this name moved him strangely. He was beaten and reviled by his heathen father. But he bore all this with joy, increasing in the strength of Christ who dwelt within him, and drawing many of his own age to the imitation of his heavenly life. When his father in his fury turned him out of doors, he said he had lost little, and would receive a great recompense instead.

Soon after he was brought before the magistrate on account of his faith. No threats could make him show a sign of fear, and the judge, pitying perhaps his tender years, offered him his freedom, assured him of his father's forgiveness, and besought him to return to his home and inheritance. But the blessed youth replied, 'I left my home gladly, for I have a greater and a better which is waiting for me.' He was filled with the same heavenly desires to the end. He was taken to the fire as if for execution, and was then brought back and re-examined, but he only protested against the cruel delay. Led out to die, he hurried on the executioners, gazed unmoved at the flames which were kindled for him, and expired, hastening, as he said, to his home.



## Desire of Heaven.

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Ask our Lord to make all earthly joy insipid, and to fill you with the constant desire of heaven. This desire will make labour easy and suffering light. It will make you fervent and detached, and bring you even here a foretaste of that eternal joy and peace to which you are hastening.

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*'Quam sordet tellus dum cælum intueor,—How vile earth seems when I look up to heaven!'*—*S. Ignatius of Loyola.*

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Souls which are on fire with the desire of heaven long for death, and cannot understand the sorrow of those who would detain them from this sovereign good. Cyril rebuked the Christians who stood weeping around him. 'You ought to laugh and rejoice,' he said, 'and escort me with delight now that I am about to suffer. Surely you do not know the city in which I am going to dwell.' Their grief, however, was but for a moment; and the letter in which they relate his passion speaks only of their holy joy in the glory of the youthful martyr.

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*'If our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven.'*—2 Cor. v. 1.

July 22.  
**S. Mary Magdalen.**

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OF the earlier life of Mary Magdalen we know only that she was 'a woman that was a sinner.' From the depth of her degradation she raised her eyes to Jesus with sorrow, hope, and love. All covered with shame she came in where Jesus was at meat, and knelt behind Him. She said not a word, but bathed His feet with her tears, wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed them in humility, and at their touch her sins and her stain were gone. Then she poured on them the costly unguent prepared for far other uses; and His own divine lips rolled away her reproach, spoke her absolution, and bade her go in peace. Thenceforward she ministered to Jesus, sat at His feet, and heard His words. She was one of the family 'whom Jesus so loved,' that He raised her brother Lazarus from the dead. Once again, on the eve of His Passion, she brought the precious ointment, and, now purified and beloved, poured it on His head, and the whole house of God is still filled with the fragrance of her anointing. She stood with our Lady and S. John at the foot of the Cross, the representative of the many who have had much forgiven. To her first, after His Blessed Mother, and through her to His Apostles, our Lord gave the certainty of His Resurrection; and to her first He made Himself known, calling her by her name because she was His.

## Silence.

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Let us learn from the example of S. Arsenius that it is not enough to mortify our flesh, if we do not also keep a careful watch over our hearts. Those who attend to the exterior alone are like statues that shine on the outside with gold and brass, but inside are full of dirt and rubbish.

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‘God knows how much I love the brethren, but I cannot be with God and man at the same time ; I will not therefore leave God to converse with them.’—*S. Arsenius.*

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When the holy Abbot Ammon visited Arsenius, who regarded him as a saint, he asked what he thought of him. Arsenius replied : ‘I look upon you as an angel.’ But when they had spoken together for some time, and Ammon repeated his question, Arsenius answered : ‘Now I look upon you as a tempter ; for though all the words you utter may be good, they are to me like so many blows from a knife.’

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‘Thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel : If you return and be at peace, you shall be saved : in silence and in hope shall your strength be.’—Isaias xxx. 15.

July 24.

**S. Francis Solano.**

FRANCIS was born at Monsilia in Spain A.D. 1549. As a boy he hated quarrels, and was always putting an end to disputes. He once threw himself between two fighting playfellows, and bore their blows till he forced them to desist. On another occasion his earnest entreaties sheathed the swords of older combatants. At the age of twenty he entered the Franciscan Order in his native city. When the plague broke out, his devotion to the sufferers nearly cost him his life ; on recovering he escaped the gratitude of the people by sailing for the American mission. His ship was wrecked at sea. During the disaster Francis found time to instruct and baptize many of the negroes on board. Some moments after, their half of the ship sank in the waves, the rest were saved. In Peru he was again an apostle of charity and peace : he stopped the duels and healed the feuds of the Spanish settlers, and taught them forbearance to the conquered race. With the gift of tongues he was understood at once by different Indian tribes, of whom thousands were baptized. A sermon of his so stirred the hearts of the dissolute inhabitants of Lima, that they clad themselves in mourning and did public penance. His zeal renewed the face of the land, and warmed it with the charity of Christ. But his own strength was worn out. With his favourite ejaculation, 'Blessed be God!' he expired on the feast of his patron S. Bonaventure, 1610.

## Peacemaking.

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The first degree of virtue is to keep peace with God ; the second to keep peace with our neighbour ; the third and most perfect is to make peace between those who are enemies, and to do this for the sake of Christ, who is our peace.

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‘My object was to reconcile, and having succeeded in it I have suffered nought.’—*S. Francis Solano.*

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Some Indian tribes yet unconverted planned a massacre of the Christians of Socoton while engaged in the ceremonies of Holy Week. Hearing of their coming, Francis went forth filled with the Holy Ghost, and falling in with them preached to them with such moving words of Christ’s Passion, and exhorted them so earnestly to embrace His holy faith, that on that very day more than nine thousand were baptized, and many the same night took a severe discipline in honour of the Passion together with the Spanish Christians.

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‘When the ways of a man shall please the Lord he will convert even his enemies to peace.’—Prov. xvi. 7.

## July 25.

### **S. James, Apostle.**

S. JAMES was the son of Zebedee, a fisherman on the Lake of Galilee, and it was from his father's ship, and while engaged in mending his nets, that he and his younger brother S. John were called to be fishers of men. Among the twelve three were again chosen as the familiar companions of our Blessed Lord, and of these James was one. He alone with Peter and John was admitted to the house of Jairus when the dead maiden was raised to life. They alone were taken up to the high mountain apart, and saw the face of Jesus shining as the sun, and His garments white as snow; and these three alone witnessed the fearful agony in Gethsemane, when His face was bowed down to earth and His garments were dyed with blood. What was it that won James a place among the favourite three? Faith, burning, impetuous, and outspoken, but which needed purifying before the 'Son of Thunder' could proclaim the Gospel of peace. It was James who demanded fire from heaven to consume the inhospitable Samaritans, and who sought the place of honour by Christ in His kingdom. Yet our Lord, in rebuking his presumption, prophesied his faithfulness to death. 'My chalice,' He said, 'indeed you shall drink; but to sit on My right hand is not Mine, but My Father's, to give.' Both the one and the other were his. First among the Apostles he drank the chalice of his passion, and first again entered into the kingdom, and took his place on the Apostles' throne.

## Reverence for Divine Calls.

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S. Anne is glorious among the Saints, not only as the mother of Mary, but because she gave Mary to God. Learn from her to reverence a divine vocation as the highest privilege, and to sacrifice every natural tie, however holy, at the call of God.

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‘Though your father should throw himself across the threshold, step over his prostrate body, and fly without shedding a tear to the standard of the Cross.’—*S. Jerome.*

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In the ages of faith the devotion to S. Anne was nowhere greater than in England. When S. Hugh of Lincoln in his last sickness was crossing from France to England, ‘he invoked,’ says his biographer, ‘the mother of the great Mother of God, S. Anne, and the breeze which had died away suddenly filled the sails. For all who cross the sea look to Mary as the Star of the Sea, to direct their course, and pray to Mary’s mother to obtain a favourable breeze. To S. Anne next after her daughter S. Hugh was most devout, and she in turn repaid him by speedy help.’ So does she still assist her faithful clients to follow the calls of God.

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‘Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck. But He said, Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.’—Luke xi. 27, 28.

July 27.  
**S. Veronica Giuliani.**

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FROM her birth in 1660, Veronica was wonderfully devout to the Passion of our Lord. In the cradle she refused food thrice a week, on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday; and when only three years old, in imitation of the martyrs, she thrust her hands into the fire, and kept them there till the smell of the burning flesh brought the inmates of the house to her side. After she had taken the habit of S. Clare, she underwent a mysterious ceremony of espousals with our Lord, and ever afterwards there floated continually before her a mystical, overflowing chalice, of which she had to drink, and which filled her with anguish as she drank it. Our Lord crowned her with a crown of thorns, which seemed to pierce into her brain, but of which nought was visible but the scars. Lastly, in His love He stamped her with the marks of His five blessed wounds. Often in an ecstasy she went through and suffered the Agony of the Cross, her body writhing and her bones cracking with the fearful torments. Through all the pain her only love was the Cross. 'Sate me with the Cross,' was her cry; and she embraced the very trees in the garden because they reminded her of it. An agony of three hours closed her long but beloved martyrdom, her very death being, like her Lord's, an act of obedience, for she could not die until her superiors had given her leave.



## Devotion to the Passion.

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Let us ask S. Veronica to help us to honour our crucified Redeemer, by denying our natural inclinations and by embracing all that is opposed to them, by flying from the praise of man, by cherishing contempt and mortification, by being lovers of the Cross, and crucified in all things.

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‘Blessed be God! Everything seems little that is suffered for His love. Blessed be the simple Cross! Blessed be pure suffering!’—*S. Veronica Giuliani*.

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Once, after the Saint had carried more than thirty pitchers full of water up two flights of steep stairs, her feet were dreadfully galled, and she was quite exhausted and ready to faint. Whilst she was in this state our Lord appeared to her, bearing His Cross, and said, ‘Look at the Cross which I am bearing, see how heavy it is.’ At this sight she felt her strength restored, and her heart burned with eagerness to suffer yet more for the love of Jesus.

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‘Christ therefore having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought : for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sins.’—1 Peter iv. 1.

July 28.  
**S. Guthlake, Hermit.**

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OF royal birth, but of a wild and adventurous disposition, Guthlake at the age of fifteen joined a robber band, and became famous through the kingdom of Mercia for his daring deeds. One night, after nine years of this life, as he lay awake in the forest, new thoughts of death, the vanity of earth, and the joys of heaven stirred his heart; whereupon, waking his companions, he bade them choose another chief, as he had vowed himself to the service of Christ. Tearing himself from their entreaties and embraces, he exchanged his arms for the dress of a rude peasant, and humbly begged admittance into the abbey of Repton. There he did penance two years; when, moved by the example of the desert Saints, he withdrew to the marshes of Lincolnshire to lead a hermit's life. In this solitude he suffered the most terrible assaults from the evil spirits. They cast him into foul swamps, reproached him incessantly with the sins of his youth, and once seemed to have brought him to the mouth of hell itself. But Guthlake was stronger in his weakness than in the most brilliant days of his youth. He prayed constantly, and when quite worn out drove the devils off by the name of Jesus, and made frequent acts of hope. He died, in 714, in the odour of sanctity, at the age of forty-seven, and the famous abbey of Croyland rose over his grave.

## Obedience to Grace.

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Every good thought is the whisper of grace in our hearts. Listen and instantly obey, lest you grieve and extinguish the Holy Spirit of God.

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‘How indispensably necessary to me is Thy grace, O Lord, in order to begin, to continue, and to accomplish what is good ! For without it I can do nothing ; but in Thee I can do everything by the strength of Thy grace.’—*Imitation*.

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It was a dreary and fearful waste to which God called Guthlake, but it became a holy and refreshing sanctuary before he died. Morning and night an angel visited him, and whispered the secrets of heaven to him as he knelt in prayer. The lower creatures obeyed him. The birds and the fishes came at his call and ate out of his hand, while the swallows would perch on his head and knees, and let him help them to build their nests. To one who expressed surprise he said, ‘Know ye not that all created beings unite themselves with him who unites himself with God ?’

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‘If you be willing, and will hearken to Me, you shall eat the good things of the land.’—Isai. i. 19.

## July 29. **S. Martha, Virgin.**

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S. JOHN tells us that 'Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus,' and yet but few glimpses are vouchsafed us of them. First, the sisters are set before us with a word. Martha received Jesus into her house, and was busy in outward, loving, lavish service, while Mary sat in silence at the feet she had bathed with her tears. Then their brother is ill, and they send to Jesus; 'Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick.' And in His own time the Lord came, and they go out to meet Him; and then follows that scene of unutterable tenderness and of sublimity unsurpassed: the silent waiting of Mary; Martha strong in faith, but realizing so vividly, with her practical turn of mind, the fact of death, and hesitating; 'Canst Thou show Thy wonders in the grave?' And then once again, on the eve of His Passion, we see Jesus at Bethany. Martha, true to her character, is serving; Mary, as at first, pours the precious ointment, in adoration and love, on His divine Head.

And then we find the tomb of S. Martha at Tarascon in Provence. When the storm of persecution came, the family of Bethany, with a few companions, were put into a boat, without oars or sail, and borne to the coast of France. S. Mary's tomb is at S. Baume; S. Lazarus is venerated as the founder of the Church of Marseilles; and the memory of the virtues and labours of S. Martha is still fragrant at Avignon and Tarascon.

## Active Service.

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‘If in all things,’ says the *Imitation*, ‘thou seekest Jesus truly, thou shalt find Jesus ; but if thou seek thyself, thou shalt find thyself also, but to thy own ruin.’

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‘Those who are at sea rest, though the ship be in perpetual movement, and the needle is still true to the pole. Let us regard God alone in all our actions ; so shall we find interior rest in the most agitated life.’—*S. Francis of Sales*.

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When Martha received Jesus into her house, she was naturally busy in preparations for such a guest. Mary sat at His feet, intent alone on listening to His gracious words. Her sister thought that the time required other service than this, and asked our Lord to bid Mary help in serving. Once again Jesus spoke in defence of Mary. ‘Martha, Martha,’ He said, ‘thou art lovingly anxious about many things ; be not over-eager ; do thy chosen work with recollectedness. Judge not Mary. Hers is the good part, the one only thing really necessary. Thine will be taken away, that something better be given thee.’ The life of action ceases when the body is laid down ; but the life of contemplation endures and is perfected in heaven.

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‘He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit : for without Me you can do nothing.’—John xv. 5.

July 30.

## **S. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi.**

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S. MARY MAGDALEN of Pazzi, of an illustrious house in Florence, was born in the year 1566, and baptized by the name of Catherine. She received her first Communion at ten years of age, and made a vow of virginity at twelve. She took great pleasure in carefully teaching the Christian doctrine to the ignorant. Her father, not knowing her vow, wished to give her in marriage, but she persuaded him to allow her to become a religious. It was more difficult to obtain her mother's consent; but at last she gained it, and she was professed, being then eighteen years of age, in the Carmelite monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence, May 17th, 1584. She changed her name Catherine into that of Mary Magdalen on becoming a nun, and took as her motto, 'To suffer or die;' and her life henceforth was a life of penance for sins not her own, and of love of our Lord, who tried her in ways fearful and strange. She was obedient, observant of the rule, humble and mortified, and had a great reverence for the religious life. She loved poverty and suffering, and hungered after Communion. God raised her to high states of prayer, and gave her rare gifts, enabling her to read the thoughts of her novices, and filling her with wisdom to direct them aright. She was twice chosen mistress of novices, and then made superioress, when God took her to Himself, May 25th, 1607. Her body is incorrupt.

## Divine Charity.

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S. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi was so filled with the love of God, that her sisters in the monastery observed it in her love of themselves, and called her 'the Mother of Charity,' and 'the Charity of the Monastery.'

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'I love souls because Jesus loves them, and I would bear anything to comfort them ; for God cannot rest in a heart ill at ease.'—*S. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi.*

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Charity is the presence of God Himself in the soul, transforming it into a new creature. S. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi called the day of Communion the day of love. The charity that burned in her heart led her in her youth to choose the house of the Carmelites, because the religious therein communicated every day. She rejoiced to see others communicate, even when she was not allowed to do so herself; and her love for her sisters grew when she saw them receive our Lord.

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'He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is charity. By this hath appeared the charity of God towards us, because God hath sent His Only-begotten Son into the world that we may live by Him.'—1 John iv. 8, 9.

## July 31. S. Ignatius of Loyola.

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S. IGNATIUS was born at Loyola in Spain in the year 1491. He served his king as a courtier and a soldier till his thirtieth year. At that age, being laid low by a wound, he received the call of divine grace to leave the world and follow Jesus Christ. He gave himself up entirely to the love of Jesus Christ. Whatever he knew to be pleasing to Jesus Christ that he did. He sacrificed everything which could separate him from Jesus Christ. He embraced poverty and humiliation, that he might become more like to Jesus Christ. He loved Jesus Christ so ardently, that he won others to join him in serving Jesus Christ. Prompted by their love for Jesus Christ, he and his companions made a vow to go to the Holy Land : they wished to live where their Divine Master had lived, to labour for souls where He had laboured ; they were prepared to die where He had died. But war broke out and prevented the execution of their project. Then they turned to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and placed themselves under his obedience. This was the beginning of the Society of Jesus : its motto was '*Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*,—To the greater glory of God.' Our Lord promised S. Ignatius that the precious heritage of His Passion should never fail his Society, a heritage of contradictions and persecutions.

S. Ignatius went to his crown on the 31st July, 1556.



## Zeal for the Glory of God.

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Ask S. Ignatius to obtain for you the grace to desire ardently the greater glory of God, even though it may cost you much suffering and humiliation.

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‘When thou shalt arrive thus far, that tribulation becomes sweet and savoury to thee for the love of Christ, then think that it is well with thee : for thou hast found a paradise on earth.’—*Imitation.*

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S. Ignatius was cast into prison at Salamanca on a suspicion of heresy. To a friend who expressed sympathy with him on account of his imprisonment he replied, ‘It is a sign that you have but little love of Christ in your heart, or you would not deem it so hard a fate to be in chains for His sake. I declare to you that all Salamanca does not contain as many fetters, manacles, and chains as I long to wear for the love of Jesus Christ.’

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‘I have glorified Thee on earth ; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.’—*John xvii. 4.*

August 1.

**B. Giovanni Colombini.**

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GIOVANNI COLOMBINI was a rich cloth-merchant of Siena, a shrewd, successful, worldly man, fond of gain, and absorbed from his boyhood in commercial affairs. One day he took up a book which he had just thrown down in anger, and found it to be the life of S. Mary of Egypt. The story of her conversion pierced his soul, and he embraced a life of poverty. He took pains to mortify himself precisely where he had received honour. In the palace where he had lived when chief magistrate of Siena he became the lowest kitchen servant for a period corresponding to his term of office, begging his food meanwhile in the streets. Touched by his humility and fervent charity, many sinners were converted, and many left the world and joined him. It was a time of strife, pillage, and bloodshed; but Giovanni and his little band of followers went about the towns and villages of Tuscany preaching Christ crucified, reconciling enemies, winning hearts to God, and kindling in them the flame of Divine love. Pope Urban V. on his return from Avignon constituted these poor little ones of Jesus into a religious Order, now extinct, called the 'Gesuati;' not, however, before they had been accused of heresy, formally examined and acquitted, their Divine Master prompting their answers. Soon after, Giovanni fell sick, and on the 31st July, A.D. 1367, he passed to eternal peace.

## Love of God.

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When S. Philip undertook the conversion of the condemned heretic Paleologus, he merely gave him the life of the B. Giovanni to read; and the apparently obdurate sinner was melted, as the Saint had foretold, by this simple tale of Divine love.

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‘Let us, dearly beloved, mourn and weep, and take bitter vengeance on ourselves: for if we were guilty of no other sin but that of ingratitude and of despising and almost refusing God, who, whether we will or no, gives Himself to us, while we, proud ungrateful wretches that we are, wanting in faith and ardour, receive this immeasurable gift with irreverence and coldness, and keep it carelessly, we ought to seek to die for Him a thousand times, if that were possible.’—*B. Giovanni Colombini*.

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B. Giovanni was by nature weak and chilly, and used to live delicately and dress warmly; but after his conversion he went barefoot and bare-headed, his chest exposed. A friend therefore said to him, ‘Art thou not cold, Giovanni?’ But the Saint took his friend’s hand, and placed it in his bosom, saying, ‘Thinkest thou I am cold?’ ‘Nay,’ said the other; ‘thou art so hot that I can scarcely bear my hand there.’

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‘In this is charity: not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us.’  
—1 John iv. 10.

August 2.

## **S. Alphonsus Liguori.**

S. ALPHONSUS was born of noble parents near Naples in 1696. His spiritual training was entrusted to the Fathers of the Oratory in that city, and from his boyhood Alphonsus was known as a most devout Brother of the Little Oratory. At the early age of sixteen he was made doctor in law, and he threw himself into this career with ardour and success. A mistake, by which he lost an important cause, showed him the vanity of human fame, and determined him to labour only for the glory of God. He entered the priesthood, devoting himself to the most neglected souls ; and to carry on this work he founded later the missionary Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. At the age of sixty-six he became Bishop of S. Agatha, and undertook the reform of his diocese with the zeal of a Saint. He made a vow never to lose time ; and though his life was spent in prayer and work, he composed a vast number of books, filled with such science, unction, and wisdom, that he has been declared one of the Doctors of the Church: This title has only been given to eighteen in as many centuries. He lived in evil times, and met with many persecutions and disappointments. For his last seven years he was prevented by constant sickness from offering the adorable Sacrifice ; but he received Holy Communion daily, and his love for Jesus Christ and his trust in Mary's prayers sustained him to the end. He died in 1787, in his ninety-first year.

## Good Use of Time.

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Let us do with all our heart the duty of each day, leaving the result to God, as well as the care of the future.

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‘Consider every occasion of self-denial as a gift which God bestows on you, that you may be able to merit greater glory in another life; and remember that what can be done to-day cannot be performed to-morrow, for time past never returns.’  
—*S. Alphonsus.*

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S. Alphonsus wrote his first book at the age of forty-nine, and in his eighty-third year had published about sixty volumes, when his director forbade him to write more. Very many of these books were written in the half-hours snatched from his labours as missionary, religious superior, and bishop, or in the midst of continual bodily and mental sufferings. With his left hand he would hold a piece of marble against his aching head while his right hand wrote. Yet he counted no time wasted which was spent in charity. He did not refuse to hold a long correspondence with a simple soldier who asked his advice, or to play the harpsichord while he taught his novices to sing spiritual canticles.

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‘Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.’—Eph. v. 16.

August 3.  
**S. Waltheof, Abbot.**

S. WALTHEOF was brought up at the court of his stepfather, King David of Scotland, and there formed a friendship with S. Aelred. When the king took him out to the chase he would withdraw to some hidden spot, and spend his time in pious reading or prayer. At the first chance he stole away from court to the Augustinian priory of S. Oswald's in Yorkshire, where he hoped to lie hid and die. But such was not his lot. He was chosen prior of Kirkham, and was sent to Rome to appeal against the election of William, Archbishop of York. On his return, an interior call of grace, seconded by the advice of S. Aelred, moved him to exchange to the Cistercian Order. Scarcely had he done so when a violent reaction set in, and it was only after bitter suspense that he felt assured of having followed God's will. He became abbot of Melrose, and governed his monks with great charity. He had the gift of tears, his voice was sweet and soft, and a certain spiritual joy always shone on his pale face. Once he appeared before King Stephen in England with his bundle of clothes on his back. His brother, who stood by, said to the king, 'See how my brother and thy kinsman does honour to his lineage.' But Stephen answered, 'If thou and I had only the grace to see it, he is an ornament to our race.' S. Waltheof died A.D. 1160. A stone in the ruins of Melrose marks his grave.

## The Value of Crosses.

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S. Waltheof teaches us what he taught his monks—that we must never fear a cross because of its outward look, as we see not the interior unction by which it is made light,—‘*Cruces vident, unctiones non vident.*’

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‘God prepares souls for His graces by interior crosses. By them the affections are purged of all earthly dross, constancy is tried, and an occasion is afforded for the exercise of the most difficult and heroic virtues.’—*S. John Climacus.*

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S. Waltheof’s trial in his novitiate is thus described. Observance of the rule became loathsome to him ; while his former life, though less austere, seemed more guided by Christian prudence, and more fit for the saving of souls. The temptation increased the more he prayed against it, till at length one day he flung himself down in utter anguish, and asked only to do God’s will. An invisible hand raised him from the ground, his soul was filled with light, and from that moment he felt neither regret nor doubt. At the end of the year he received the white habit from his friend, S. Aelred, who clothed him with the usual form : ‘The Lord put off thee the old man with his deeds.’ Great indeed was the joy of his heart as the brethren answered, ‘Amen.’

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‘*Nolite timere, ego sum,*—It is I, fear ye not.’  
—Mark vi. 50.

## August 4. S. Dominic.

S. DOMINIC was born in Spain, A.D. 1170. Sympathy for the suffering and a spirit of self-sacrifice marked his earliest years. As a student he sold his books to feed the poor in a famine, and offered himself in ransom for a slave. At the age of twenty-five he became superior of the Canons Regular of Osma, and accompanied his bishop to France. There his heart was well-nigh broken by the ravages of the Albigensian heresy, and his life was henceforth devoted to the conversion of heretics and the defence of the Faith. For this end he established his threefold religious Order. The convent for nuns was founded first, to rescue young girls from heresy and crime. Then a company of apostolic men gathered around him, and became the Order of Friar Preachers. Lastly came the Tertiaries, persons of both sexes, living in the world. God blessed the new Order, and France, Italy, Spain, and England welcomed the Preaching Friars. Our Lady took them under her special protection, whispered to S. Dominic as he preached, and revealed to him the devotion of the Rosary, his most powerful weapon with souls. His nights were spent in prayer; and though pure as a virgin, thrice before morning broke he scourged himself to blood. His words rescued countless souls, and three times raised the dead to life. At length, on August 6th, 1221, at the age of fifty-one, he gave up his soul to God.



## Devotion to the Rosary.

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‘God has never,’ said S. Dominic, ‘refused me what I have asked ;’ and he has left us the Rosary that we may learn, with Mary’s help, to pray easily and simply in the same holy trust.

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‘Preach my Rosary. It alone will suffice to destroy heresy and nourish virtue. It alone will propitiate the Divine mercy, and will be a great and singular safeguard to the Church of God.’—*Revelation to S. Dominic.*

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It was in 1208, while S. Dominic knelt in the little chapel of Notre Dame de la Prouille, and implored the great Mother of God to save the Church, that our Lady appeared to him, gave him the Rosary, and bade him go forth and preach. Beads in hand, he revived the courage of the Catholic troops, led them to victory against overwhelming numbers, and finally crushed the heresy. Twice since the Saint went to heaven has the Church’s cause been saved through the Rosary he taught : once by the victory of Lepanto, in 1571, in honour of which the festival of Rosary Sunday was established by S. Pius V. ; and again in 1717, when the Turks were defeated at Belgrade, and Clement XI. hung the standards of the infidels as trophies of Mary’s power in the Church of the Rosary at Rome.

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‘Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee ; blessed art thou among women.’—Luke i. 28.

August 5.  
**S. Oswald, Martyr.**

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ON the dethronement of his father, the pagan king of Northumbria, Oswald took refuge in Scotland, and was brought up a Christian by the monks of Iona. After some years he collected an army to recover his paternal throne. On the eve of battle, Oswald set up on the field a great wooden cross, before which he and his army knelt in prayer. That night S. Columba in a vision assured him of the victory which on the morrow regained for him his throne. The conversion of his subjects was now his one desire ; he brought S. Aidan from Iona, went with him from village to village, and acted as his interpreter and catechist. The two Saints laboured and prayed together with such earnestness and faith, that Northumbria soon became a Christian land. Oswald loved much to sing Office with the monks in choir, and after Lauds would remain through the night in prayer. At the same time he attended most carefully to the needs of his subjects, and by his charity won their hearts. On Easter-day, when sitting down to a banquet, he was told that a crowd of destitute people were begging at the gate. He at once sent out a silver dish full of meat, and ordered the dish itself to be divided among them ; whereat S. Aidan, who was at table, seizing the king's right hand, exclaimed, ' May this hand never perish ! ' The prayer was prophetic : when a few years later Oswald fell in battle, his right hand and arm remained incorrupt.

## Perseverance in Prayer.

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By prayer S. Oswald recovered his kingdom, converted his subjects, and attained to sanctity. How much might we each effect through humble persevering prayer !

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‘ This is my only hope and consolation—to flee unto Thee in every tribulation, to trust in Thee, to call upon Thee lovingly, and to wait patiently for Thy consolation.’—*Imitation*.

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After Oswald had reigned most prosperously for eight years, his kingdom was invaded by Penda, the barbarous king of Mercia. The inferior army of the Saint could make no head against the pagan host. When at length Oswald saw his force entirely surrounded, and flight impossible, he entreated Heaven for the souls of his soldiers. As one by one they fell, their sovereign’s prayer went before them to the judgment-seat. At last the Saint himself was slain, and his dying prayer, ‘ O God, be merciful to their souls,’ passed into a proverb in the North.

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‘ And will not God revenge His elect, who cry to Him day and night ?’—Luke xviii. 7.

## August 6.

### S. Dorotheus, Abbot.

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IN his youth S. Dorotheus had so much aversion to study that he said he 'would rather touch a serpent than a book;' but by perseverance he became so inflamed with love of learning that he forgot to eat or sleep. When he entered the monastery in Palestine, he said, 'If intense application to study teaches us the habit of it, surely the practice of virtues will make us Saints.' He made known every thought to his superiors, and was guided by them in all things. When tempted to think he knew what they would tell him, he said, 'Accursed be thy judgments, O my soul; all thou hast learnt is from the devil;' and immediately disclosed his whole mind to them. By this means he lived in perfect peace. He said, 'If my reason told me the sun was a sun, or darkness was darkness, I would mistrust it and scarcely believe it.' He said he had never preferred himself to another, nor had to reproach himself with one word that could wound another. He suffered many contradictions, sicknesses, and assaults of the devil; but he accepted all from God, saying, 'I could easily find many causes for these evils, but it is more true and more useful to believe they are sent by God, who knows how good it is for me to suffer.'

Dorotheus died about the year 560.

## Renunciation of Self-will.

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When a traveller finds a short road to his journey's end, he is careful to choose it. He who renounces his own will has found a short way of triumphing over his evil inclinations, and ought to profit by it.

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'He who labours earnestly to renounce his own will, will arrive at the blessed mansion of peace of heart.'—*S. Dorotheus*.

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S. Dorotheus thus describes his mortification of self-will with regard to rest: 'Guests came late, and I had to stay with them; their camel-drivers arrived afterwards, and had to be attended to. When I was called to church I had hardly taken a few moments' sleep; I was overcome by fatigue and consumed by fever; but I answered, "I thank thee, my brother; may God reward thy great charity." He was hardly gone before I fell asleep again. Distressed that my idleness caused me to miss the Office, I begged one brother to undertake to rouse me, and another to keep me awake in church; and I assure you, I revered them almost as much as if they had saved my soul.'

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'If thou give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thy enemies.'—*Ecclus. xviii. 31.*

## August 7. S. Cajetan.

CAJETAN was born at Vicenza in 1480, of noble and pious parents, who dedicated him to our Blessed Lady. From childhood he was known as the Saint, and in later years as 'The hunter of souls.' A distinguished student, he left his native town to seek obscurity in Rome, but was there forced to accept office at the court of Julius II. On the death of that Pontiff he returned to Vicenza, and disgusted his relatives by joining the Confraternity of S. Jerome, whose members were drawn from the lowest classes; while he spent his fortune in building hospitals, and himself in nursing the plague-stricken. To renew the lives of the clergy, he instituted the first community of Regular Clerks, known as Theatines. They devoted themselves to preaching, the administration of the Sacraments, and the careful performance of the Church's rites and ceremonies. S. Cajetan was the first to introduce the Forty Hours' adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, as an antidote to the heresy of Calvin. He had a most tender love of our Blessed Lady, and his piety was rewarded. One Christmas-eve she placed the Infant Jesus in his arms, and she appeared to console him as he died. When the Germans, under the Constable Bourbon, sacked Rome, S. Cajetan was barbarously scourged, to extort from him riches which he had long before securely stored in heaven. Worn out with toil and sickness, he went to his reward in 1547.

## Devotion to our Lady.

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Imitate S. Cajetan's devotion to our Blessed Lady by invoking her aid before every work.

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'Let us pray our most Blessed Advocate, the Mother of our Redeemer, to deign to cover our iniquities, and plead for us before the just Judge, her Son.'—*S. Cajetan.*

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When S. Cajetan was on his deathbed, resigned to the will of God, eager for pain to satisfy his love, and for death to attain to life, he beheld the Mother of God, radiant with splendour, and surrounded by ministering Seraphim. In profound veneration he said, 'Lady, bless me.' Mary replied, 'Cajetan, receive the blessing of my Son, and know that I am here as a reward for the sincerity of your love, and to lead you to Paradise.' She then exhorted him to patience in fighting an evil spirit who troubled him, and gave orders to the choirs of angels to escort his soul in triumph to heaven. Then turning her countenance full of majesty and sweetness upon him, she said, 'Cajetan, my Son calls thee. Let us go in peace.'

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'For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.'—Wisd. vii. 14.

August 8.

**B. Peter Favre.**

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BORN A.D. 1506 of poor Savoyard shepherds, Peter, at his earnest request, was sent to school, and in after years to the University of Paris. His college friends were S. Ignatius of Loyola and S. Francis Xavier. Ignatius found the young man's heart ready for his thoughts of apostolic zeal; Peter became his first companion, and in the year of England's revolt was ordained the first priest of the new Society of Jesus. From that day to the close of his life he was ever in the van of the Church's struggle with falsehood and sin. Boldly facing heresy in Germany, he laboured not less diligently to rouse up the dormant faith and charity of Catholic courts and Catholic lands. The odour of Blessed Peter's virtues drew after him into religion the Duke of Gandia, Francis Borgia, and a young student of Nimeguen, Peter Canisius, both to become Saints like their master. The Pope, Paul III., had chosen Blessed Favre to be his theologian at the Council of Trent, and King John III. of Portugal wished to send him as patriarch and apostle into Abyssinia. Sick and worn with labour, but obedient unto death, the father hastened back to Rome, where his last illness came upon him. He turned his thoughts at once away from all other cares to get his soul ready for its departure. He died, though hardly forty, as one would wish to die, in the very arms of his best friend and spiritual father, S. Ignatius.



## Union of Prayer and Work.

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As the body sinks under fatigue unless supported by food, so external works, however holy, wear out the soul which is not regularly nourished by prayer. In the most crowded day we can make time briefly and secretly to lift our soul to God and draw new strength from Him.

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‘Your first duty is to your soul, and then other things may come ; always remembering that the good of the soul is to be the final object of everything.’—*B. Peter Favre.*

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One day when the Saint was going to hear the Lenten sermon in the court chapel at Valladolid, ‘the porter, not knowing me,’ he tells us, ‘did not admit me, and so, remaining outside the door, I called to mind how often I had given free entrance into my soul to vain thoughts and bad spirits, and had refused it to Jesus, who was knocking at the door, and how badly Jesus Christ was received everywhere by the world. I prayed for myself and for the porter, that the Lord might not make us wait very long in purgatory before entering heaven. Many other good thoughts then came into my mind ; and therefore I felt great affection for that porter, who had occasioned me so much devotion.’

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‘Thy power, O Lord, is not in a multitude ; but the prayer of the humble and the meek hath always pleased Thee.’—*Judith ix. 16.*

August 9.  
**S. Pœmen, Abbot.**

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THE sanctity of S. Pœmen was so eminent that he has been called the fellow-citizen of the angels, the chief of solitaries, and the prince of the desert. He was an Egyptian, and about the age of fifteen he entered the desert, and persuaded his six young brothers to do the same. They embraced a life of prayer, labour, and extreme mortification, often passing many days without tasting food. Although so severe towards himself, Pœmen's spirit was one of marvellous gentleness towards others. He would say, 'If a monk wishes to taste true peace, he must learn never to judge another, and be convinced of his own nothingness.' A solitary once said to him, 'My father, when I receive a visit from one of the brethren whom I know to be guilty of a considerable fault, I refuse to admit him ; but if I know him to be a good religious, I receive him with joy.' S. Pœmen answered, 'If you are kind to him who is good, you should be doubly so to him who is ailing.' He also said : 'God came down to earth to see the guilt of Sodom before punishing it, to teach us never to believe the evil we hear of another.' And again: 'A just man who subdues his passions may give lessons to others ; but if he is subject to them he is like one who pulls down his own house to build that of another.'

Pœmen died at a great age, about the year 451.

## Kind Judgments.

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We shall never arrive at true purity of heart until we believe ourselves to be lower than all other creatures. This is not difficult, for even if we were to see a murderer, we might say, 'He has only killed one man, while I have put my soul to death many times by my sins.'

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'If by silence we hide the faults of others, God also will hide ours ; but if we divulge them, God will also make known our own.'—*S. Pæmen*.

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S. Pæmen greatly disapproved that bitter zeal which blames every little fault without consideration for the weakness of human nature, and which is ever prone to judge and condemn our neighbour. Some solitaries said to him, 'My father, when we see any of the brethren asleep at the hour of prayer, ought we not to awaken them?' But Pæmen answered, 'When I see a brother thus overcome by sleep, I only wish I could pillow his head upon my knees, that he might rest the better.'

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'Why judgest thou thy brother? or why dost thou despise thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.'—Rom. xiv. 10.

August 10.  
**S. Laurence, Martyr.**

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S. LAURENCE was the chief among the seven deacons of the Roman Church. In the exercise of his office he ministered to the poor of Christ, and his charity to them proved the occasion of his martyrdom. In the year 258 Pope Sixtus was led out to die, and S. Laurence stood by, weeping that he could not share his fate. 'I was your minister,' he said, 'when you consecrated the Blood of our Lord; why do you leave me behind now that you are about to shed your own?' The holy Pope comforted him with the words, 'Do not weep, my son: in three days you will follow me.' This prophecy came true. The prefect of the city knew the rich offerings which the Christians put into the hands of the clergy, and he demanded the treasures of the Roman Church from Laurence, their guardian. The Saint promised at the end of three days to show him riches exceeding all the wealth of the empire, and set about collecting the poor, the infirm, and the religious who lived by the alms of the faithful. He then bade the prefect 'see the treasures of the Church.' Christ, whom Laurence had served in His poor, gave him strength in the conflict which ensued. Roasted over a slow fire, he made sport of his pains. 'I am done enough,' he said; 'eat, if you will.' At length Christ, the Father of the poor, received him into eternal habitations.

## Love of the Poor.

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Our Lord appears before us in the persons of the poor. Charity to them is a great sign of predestination. It is almost impossible, the holy Fathers assure us, for any one who is charitable to the poor for Christ's sake to perish.

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'But where, sayest thou, can I find Christ on earth? Where can I find Him, that I may give to Him? Give alms on earth, and thou hast fed Christ in heaven.'—*S. Augustine.*

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God showed by the glory which shone around S. Laurence the value He set upon his love for the poor. S. Leo tells us that Rome was not less honoured by the death of Laurence than Jerusalem by that of Stephen; and we know from S. Augustine how many miracles were wrought at his tomb. A brother of S. Ambrose was saved from shipwreck in consequence of a vow which he made to S. Laurence. Prayers innumerable were granted at his tomb; and he continued from his throne in heaven his charity to those in need, granting them, as S. Augustine says, 'the smaller graces which they sought, and leading them to the desire of better gifts.'

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'For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took Me in.'—Matt. xxv. 35.

August 11.

## S. Lutgarde, Virgin.

THERE was little in Lutgarde's education to make her a Saint. Her parents first betrothed her to a merchant ; and when, through the loss of her fortune, her marriage became impossible, they urged her to take the veil. After some resistance she entered, as pensioner, the Benedictine convent at Tongres in Brabant, but lived in a discontented state, secretly sighing for a worldly life. One day when she had gone to gossip, as was her wont, in the parlours, our Lord Himself stood before her. Pointing to His still bleeding Heart, He bade her seek in Him alone the joys of Divine love. From that hour Lutgarde renounced the world and its follies, and began a new life of prayer and penance. During the bloody struggle with the Albigenses she offered herself a victim for the Church, and suffered most fearful tortures of mind and body. To conceal the miraculous gifts with which she was favoured, she exchanged to the Cistercian Order, and prayed earnestly that she might remain there unknown. Her petition was granted. She lived for forty years in a community of French nuns, from whom, by her ignorance of the language, she was completely isolated. Towards the end of her life, her solitude was further increased by the total loss of sight. At length, in 1146, her eyes, which had been closed for eleven years, opened to behold a troop of blessed spirits who came to lead her to heaven.

## Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

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‘Frequently examine thy heart,’ said a great servant of God, ‘and contrast it with the Heart of Jesus.’ It was thus S. Lutgarde changed her life ; thus too may we change our own.

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‘Let us make three tabernacles : one in the Feet, one in the Hands, and one in the Sacred Side ; and in this last may I watch and rest, eat, drink, and read, and do my whole work in life.’  
—*S. Bonaventure.*

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The gift of healing which S. Lutgarde possessed brought to the convent numerous visitors, who interrupted her silence and observance. The Saint therefore prayed for some other less dangerous grace, and received the power of understanding the secret things of Sacred Scripture. Still she was dissatisfied, and complained that such high mysteries were not for one so simple. ‘What wouldst thou, then?’ asked Christ of her. ‘Not Thy Word, but Thy Heart, O Lord, for me!’ she replied. In that moment and from that time the Sacred Heart of Jesus was present in the heart of the holy maiden, purifying her and encouraging her to suffer ; thenceforth she never knew another wayward desire or evil thought, but lived in and for her Lord.

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‘And if Christ be in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin ; but the spirit liveth because of justification.’—Rom. viii. 10.

August 12.  
**S. Clare, Abbess.**

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ON Palm Sunday, March 17th, 1212, the Bishop of Assisi left the altar to present with a palm a noble maiden, eighteen years of age, whom bashfulness had detained in her place. This maiden was S. Clare. Already she had learnt from S. Francis to hate the world, and was secretly resolved to live for God alone. The same night she escaped, with one companion, to the Church of the Portiuncula, where she was met by S. Francis and his brethren. At the altar of our Lady S. Francis cut off her hair, clothed her in his habit of penance, a piece of sackcloth, with his cord as a girdle. Thus was she espoused to Christ. When her relatives would have carried her home, she resisted them by force, and drove them away in horror by the sight of her shaven head. In a miserable house outside Assisi she founded her Order, and was joined by her sister, fourteen years of age, and afterwards by her mother and other noble ladies. They went barefoot, observed perpetual abstinence, constant silence, and perfect poverty. S. Clare absolutely refused all revenues, and would have but one possession, the Blessed Sacrament and what served for its use. During her illness of twenty-eight years the Holy Eucharist was her only support, and spinning linen for the altar the one work of her hands. She died A.D. 1253, as the Passion was being read, and our Lady and the angels conducted her to glory.



## Holy Poverty.

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In a luxurious and effeminate age the daughters of S. Clare still bear the noble title of poor, and preach by their daily lives the poverty of Jesus Christ.

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‘They say that we are too poor ; alas, can a heart which possesses God be truly called poor ?’  
—*S. Clare.*

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While the Saracen army of Frederick II. was ravaging the valley of Spoleto, a body of infidels advanced to assault S. Clare’s convent, which stood outside Assisi. The Saint in her poverty had no servants to defend her, and no treasure wherewith to buy off the foe. Her one resource was the Blessed Sacrament. She caused It to be placed in a monstrance above the gate of the monastery facing the enemy, and kneeling before It, prayed, ‘Deliver not to beasts, O Lord, the souls of those who confess to Thee.’ A voice from the Host replied, ‘My protection will never fail you.’ A sudden panic seized the infidel host, which took to flight, and the Saint’s convent was spared. Thus was S. Clare’s poverty more powerful than the strength of man.

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‘Behold I have refined thee, but not as silver ; I have chosen thee in the furnace of poverty.’—  
Isai. xlviii. 10.

## August 13.

### B. John Berchmans.

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THE eldest boy of a poor cordwainer, in a small Belgian town, John was ever a dutiful, prayerful, and studious child. Our Lord called him when but young to leave his father and his father's house, to serve Him in the Society of Jesus. And because young Berchmans was so good a son, so promising a scholar, it cost his father much to give him up to God ; but he was too good a Christian to refuse outright. John had no sooner become a novice than in his faithful keeping of his rule, the wonderful faultlessness of his life, his fervour in prayer, and his love of the brotherhood, he seemed to all, not so much a saint, as what indeed they called him, an angel. He had hardly taken his religious vows when he was sent to the centre of Christendom, the holy city of Rome. His life there was perfect as a student within his college-walls ; but his modesty, his purity, shone out as great virtue always does ; and the young laymen who attended the lectures would come to gaze upon his beautiful and holy face, and go away the better for the sight. Three short years, and his last sickness found him sighing for heaven ; and three days before the great feast of Mary's Assumption, 1621, holding his rule-book and his crucifix in his wasted hands, with his rosary twined around them, the symbols of his obedience, his love of suffering, and devotion to his heavenly Mother, the young man breathed his last.

## Fidelity in Little Things.

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B. John's favourite motto was, 'Make a great deal of the very least things : ' and this, like another of his, 'Speak little, do much,' shows how in so uneventful and short a life he became so great a Saint. Nothing was of small importance to him that had to do with God.

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'Labour now a little, and thou shalt find great rest ; yea, everlasting joy. If thou continue faithful and fervent in working, God will doubtless be faithful and liberal in rewarding.'—*Imitation*.

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When he was a boy of thirteen, his father's slackness of business and his mother's long illness seemed to make it impossible that John should go on with his studies. He was called into the sick-room, and there this was broken to him. It meant nothing less than the abandonment of his vocation to the priesthood. For a moment he was silent ; then in tears he threw himself on his knees, stretched out his hands, and implored his parents to let him but go on the few years longer, until he could be received into college. 'Do not be alarmed about the expense. I shall be content to live on bread and water.' His poor parents could not refuse him. They gave way, and God enabled him to continue his studies.

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'Well done, good and faithful servant : because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things.'—Matt. xxv. 21.

## August 14.

### **S. Pior, Solitary.**

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WHEN very young, Pior left his home, promising God never again to behold the face of his relations. He placed himself under S. Antony, and made such progress in virtue that, when only twenty-five, Antony deemed him fit to live in solitude. The cell in the desert of Nitria in which he spent his life was so miserable that other solitaries who tried to imitate him could not remain in it a single year. The little food he took he ate walking about, lest he should feel any pleasure in the act. The last thirty years of his life he drank nothing but water so salt and brackish, that the solitaries who visited him brought water with them rather than taste it. Yet by his prayers he obtained a spring of excellent water for some of the brethren.

Fifty years after he left home, his sister hearing he was living sent her sons to implore him to visit her. He refused, and she then procured letters from the bishop to S. Antony, desiring him to send Pior to her. Antony gave him the obedience, and Pior immediately complied. When he reached her house he shut his eyes, and said, 'My sister, behold your brother Pior; take your fill of gazing at him.' She begged him to enter, but he would not; and after making his prayer outside her door he returned to the desert without having seen her, faithful to his early promise. Pior died in his hundredth year, towards the end of the fourth century.

## Detachment.

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In this life we are crossing, as it were, a stormy sea in an overladen ship. If we do not throw overboard the useless cargo we shall perish. The more we lighten ourselves of earthly goods, the sooner shall we reach our eternal haven, the vision of God.

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‘If we shun the bitterness and labour of penance to seek repose in this world, we shall have no share in the true and infinitely sweet goods of eternity.’—*S. Pior.* 

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Pior hired himself one summer to a husbandman to gather in the harvest, as was the custom with some solitaries, that they might earn their bread in the sweat of their brow, and when he came for his wages the man told him he should be paid another time. Pior did not ask again, but returned next summer and worked for him with equal care. Again he received no payment: the same happened the third year, and Pior uttered no impatient word, nor relaxed in his diligent labour. At length the man brought the money, and throwing himself at his feet, implored him to pardon his delay. But Pior simply told him to go to the church and take it to the priest.

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‘Health of the soul in holiness of justice is better than all gold and silver.’—*Ecclus. xxx. 15.*

## August 15.

### S. Alipius, Bishop.

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ALIPPIUS was a fellow-townsmen of S. Augustine, and for some years his pupil. Whilst a catechumen he was carried away, like his master, by the delusions of the Manichees ; yet he retained in a remarkable degree an innocence of heart which rendered vice distasteful to him. His unsensuality was felt as a keen reproach by his ardent master, and helped to feed the fire of compunction in which Augustine was finally purified. On the other hand, Augustine's prudent exhortations stood Alipius in good stead on various occasions. Twice, at Carthage and at Rome, he was nearly ruined by bad companions ; but the two friends were preserved for Heaven and for one another. When the hour of Augustine's conversion came, Alipius was beside him. Together they entered that famous garden, for both the arena in which the battle of their life was fought. Together they were baptised, and together left Italy for their native Africa. They lived together first at Tagaste, afterwards at Hippo, until Alipius was made bishop of the former city in 392.

As bishops their intercourse was continual ; and although Alipius ever loved to hide his aureole in his master's brightness, the keen eyes of Saints like S. Jerome could detect his effective co-operation in S. Augustine's greatest achievements. Together they went to their reward in the year 430.

## Good Choice of Companions.

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A man's worst enemies are those who lead him into sin; his best friends those who keep him from it. Through faithfully cleaving to S. Augustine, Alipius shared in the grace of his conversion. This friendship became the more intense as it became holier; so that, years after his conversion, S. Augustine could write to S. Jerome, 'Any one who knows us would say, that he and I are only twain in body, not in soul.'

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'When we carelessly make friends with wicked persons, we become involved in their sins; and our life is in discordance with Him who is perfect righteousness, in proportion as it harmonises with the friendship of the bad.'—*S. Gregory.*

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Alipius was one day carried off by bad companions to the amphitheatre. At first he protested, and shut his eyes; but yielding a little, as S. Augustine says, 'he was not now the man he came, but one of the crowd with which he had mingled.'

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'Separate thyself from thine enemies, and take heed of thy friends. A faithful friend is a strong defence, and he that hath found him hath found a treasure.'—*Ecclus. vi. 13, 14.*

## August 16.

### S. Hyacinth.

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HYACINTH, the glorious apostle of Poland and Russia, was born of noble parents in Poland, about the year 1185. In 1218, being already canon of Cracow, he accompanied his uncle, the bishop of that place, to Rome. There he met S. Dominic, and received the habit of the Friar Preachers from the patriarch himself, of whom he became a living copy. So wonderful was his progress in virtue that within a year Dominic sent him to preach and plant the Order in Poland, where he founded two houses. His apostolic journeys extended over numerous regions. Austria, Bohemia, Livonia, the shores of the Black Sea, Tartary and Northern China on the east, and Sweden and Norway to the west, were evangelized by him, and he is said to have visited Scotland. Everywhere multitudes were converted; churches and convents were built; one hundred and twenty thousand pagans and infidels were baptised by his hands. He worked numerous miracles, and at Cracow raised a dead youth to life. He had inherited from S. Dominic a most filial confidence in the Mother of God; to her he ascribed his success, and to her aid he looked for his salvation. On the eve of the Assumption he was warned of his coming death. In spite of a wasting fever he celebrated Mass on the feast, and communicated as a dying man. He was anointed at the foot of the altar, and died the same day, A. D. 1257.



## Devotion to our Lady.

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S. Hyacinth teaches us to employ every effort in the service of God, and to rely for success not on our own industry, but on the prayer of His Immaculate Mother.

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‘What can Jesus Christ refuse His Mother, who so tenderly embraced, fed, and served Him? Of a surety He will grant all she asks from His mercy.’—*Blessed Henry Suso*.

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When S. Hyacinth was at Kiev, the Tartars sacked the town, but it was only as he finished Mass that the Saint heard of the danger. Without waiting to unvest, he took the ciborium in his hands, and was leaving the church. As he passed by an image of Mary, a voice said : ‘Hyacinth, my son, why dost thou leave me behind? Take me with thee, and leave me not to mine enemies.’ The statue was of heavy alabaster ; but when Hyacinth took it in his arms it was light as a reed. With the Blessed Sacrament and the image he came to the river Dnieper, and walked dryshod over the surface of the waters.

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‘He that shall find Me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.’—Proverbs viii. 35.

August 17.  
**S. Bessarion, Solitary.**

BESSARION, an Egyptian, was early instructed in holy things. In childhood he was favoured by God with supernatural lights, and filled with His divine love. He never lost his baptismal innocence, and renouncing all things, lived by faith alone. He would have neither house nor lands, nor even a fixed abode. Looking upon himself as a captive stranger upon earth, he spent his life in wandering about the desert, bearing patiently day and night the scorching heat or the extreme cold. His heroic detachment led him to practise most severe penance; and he once stood forty days and nights in a thicket of thorns. His charity equalled his detachment. Finding the corpse of a poor man lying uncovered, he laid his cloak upon him, and as he went further on he bestowed his tunic on a beggar, remaining without clothes until a passer-by bestowed some upon him. His life was so faultless that it resembled that of an angel; and his unbounded faith enabled him to work numberless miracles, though in his humility he concealed them. Thus, for example, when walking by the sea-shore, his disciple said, 'Father, I am overcome by thirst,' Bessarion knelt in prayer, and then said, 'Drink the waters of the sea.' The disciple knelt down to do so, and found it changed into fresh water: he wished to take some of it with him, but Bessarion forbade him, saying, 'God, who is here, is likewise everywhere.'

## Faith.

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Our faith teaches us that all we see in this world should be no more to us than the toys of a child. Let us not amuse ourselves with such trifles, but try to banish the world and its cares from our hearts.

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‘Our greatest misfortune is the value we set upon visible things, which are the only ones we prize. If we could but taste for one moment the treasures of heaven, how we should despise those which now dazzle and fascinate us!’—*S. Nilus.*

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Bessarion would sometimes leave the wilds of the desert, and traverse those parts inhabited by other solitaries. When he approached a monastery he stood outside, sighing and weeping like a shipwrecked mariner who has lost his all. When offered help or shelter, he answered, ‘I can never enter till I have regained what I have lost;’ meaning, his original innocence. And he added: ‘I have fallen into the hands of pirates. I am degraded from my rank of nobility. I must suffer all the days of my life. There is nothing left for me but to consume it in tears.’

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‘Hath not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him?’—James ii. 5.

August 18.  
**S. Helen, Empress.**

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IT was the pious boast of the city of Colchester for many ages, that S. Helen was born within its walls; and though this honour has been disputed, it is certain that she was a British princess. She embraced Christianity late in life; but her incomparable faith and piety greatly influenced her son Constantine, the first Christian emperor, and served to kindle a holy zeal in the hearts of the Roman people. Forgetful of her high dignity, she delighted to assist at the Divine Office amid the poor; and by her alms-deeds showed herself a mother to the indigent and distressed. In her eightieth year she made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, with the ardent desire of discovering the Cross on which our Blessed Redeemer suffered. After many labours three crosses were found on Mount Calvary, together with the nails, and the inscription recorded by the Evangelists. It still remained to identify the true Cross of our Lord. By the advice of the bishop, Macarius, the three were applied successively to a woman afflicted with an incurable disease, and no sooner had the third touched her than she arose perfectly healed. The pious empress, transported with joy, built a most glorious church on Mount Calvary to receive the precious relic, sending portions of it to Rome and Constantinople, where they were solemnly exposed to the adoration of the faithful. Shortly after, she herself returned to Rome, where she expired A.D. 328.

## Devotion to the Holy Cross.

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S. Helen thought it the glory of her life to find the Cross of Christ, and to raise a temple in its honour. How many Christians in these days are ashamed to make this life-giving sign, and to confess themselves the followers of the Crucified !

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‘O admirable power of the Cross, the ineffable glory of the Passion, in which is the judgment-seat of God, the condemnation of the world, and the virtue of the Crucified !’—*S. Leo.*

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In the year 312 Constantine found himself attacked by Maxentius with vastly superior forces, and the very existence of his empire threatened. In this crisis he bethought him of the crucified Christian God whom his mother Helen worshipped ; and kneeling down, prayed God to reveal Himself and give him the victory. Suddenly, at noonday, a cross of fire was seen by his army in the calm and cloudless sky, and beneath it the words, *In hoc signo vinces*,—‘Through this sign thou shalt conquer.’ By divine command Constantine made a standard like the cross he had seen, which was borne at the head of his troops ; and under this Christian ensign they marched against the enemy, and obtained a complete victory.

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‘He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross.’—Phil. ii. 8.

August 19.

## **B. Mary of Oignies.**

**B. MARY** was born near Liège in 1180. She married at fourteen, after a childhood of remarkable sanctity. Her holy example induced her husband also to devote himself to good works, to live in chastity, and distribute his riches to the poor, and together they served a hospital of lepers. Neither the mockery of the world nor the artifices of the devil induced them to abandon their holy purposes; and this constancy drew down upon them abundant celestial benedictions. Mary was constantly rapt in ecstasy. She worked many miracles, read the secrets of hearts, and often saw our Lord Himself in the Sacred Host. Her spirit was so occupied with the presence of God that nothing could distract her; and she passed many days without speaking, except to say, 'I desire to receive the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ,' and after Communion she relapsed again into total silence. Her tender love and compassion for the sufferings of Jesus were so great that she conceived an ardent desire for crosses. She never ate until evening, and then only black bread; but the angels appeared to her at table, and their heavenly conversation overwhelmed her soul with delights. Being filled with humility and compunction, she had an extreme horror of the smallest sin, and, although her life was so innocent, the rigour of her penance was indescribable. She died at the age of thirty-three, in a hermitage near Oignies.

## Desire of Suffering.

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The example of B. Mary teaches us with what tender affection we should regard the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and reminds us that suffering for Him is the best proof we can offer Him of our gratitude for His boundless love.

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‘Write, O most loving Saviour, Thy wounds upon my heart, that I may always read in them Thy pains and Thy love.’—*S. Augustine.*

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B. Mary could not behold a crucifix without being dissolved in tears. To stop them she contemplated the majesty and impassibility of God, but the remembrance of what this God of Majesty had suffered for her made them flow faster than before. A priest once begged her to moderate her tears and sighs, and pray in silence. Unable to do this, she left the church ; but she prayed God to show the priest the impossibility of a creature resisting the operation of the Holy Ghost. The same day at Mass this priest was so filled with tenderness that he was utterly unable to restrain his tears, and he shed them so copiously that his vestments, and even the altar-cloths, were bathed with them.

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‘Let us go forth, therefore, to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.’—Heb. xiii. 13.

August 20.  
**S. Bernard.**

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BERNARD was born at the castle of Fontaines in Burgundy. The grace of his person and the vigour of his intellect filled his parents with the highest hopes, and the world lay bright and smiling before him, when he renounced it for ever and joined the monks of Citeaux. Here his holy example attracted so many novices that other monasteries were erected, and Bernard was appointed abbot of that of Clairvaux. Unsparing with himself, he at first expected too much of his brethren, who were disheartened at his severity; but soon perceiving his error, he led them forward by the sweetness of his correction and the mildness of his rule to wonderful perfection. In spite of his desire to lie hid, the fame of his sanctity spread far and wide, and many churches asked for him as their bishop. Through the help of B. Eugenius III., his former subject, he escaped this dignity: yet his retirement was continually invaded; the poor and the weak sought his protection; bishops, kings, and Popes applied to him for advice; and at length Eugenius himself charged him to preach the Crusade. By his fervour, eloquence, and miracles Bernard kindled the enthusiasm of Christendom, and two splendid armies were despatched against the infidel. Their defeat was only due, said the Saint, to their own sins. Bernard died A.D. 1153. His most precious writings have earned for him the titles of the last of the Fathers and a Doctor of Holy Church.



## The one End of Life.

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Let us constantly ask ourselves S. Bernard's daily question, 'To what end didst thou come hither ?'

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'If you desire to enter here, leave at the threshold the body you have brought with you from the world; here there is room only for your soul.'—*S. Bernard to his postulants.*

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All his brothers followed Bernard to Citeaux except Nivard the youngest, who was left to be the stay of his father in his old age. 'You will now be heir of everything,' said they to him, as they departed. 'Yes,' said the boy; 'you leave me earth, and keep heaven for yourselves. Do you call that fair?' And he too left the world. At length their aged father came to exchange wealth and honour for the poverty of a monk of Clairvaux. One only sister remained behind: she was married, and loved the world and its pleasures. Magnificently dressed she visited Bernard; he refused to see her, and only at last consented to do so, not as her brother, but as the minister of Christ. The words he then spoke moved her so much that two years later she retired to a convent with her husband's consent, and died in the reputation of sanctity.

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'Thou art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary.'—Luke x. 41, 42.

August 21.

## **S. Jane Frances de Chantal.**

AT the age of sixteen Jane Frances de Frémyot, already a motherless child, was placed under the care of a worldly-minded governess. In this crisis she offered herself to the Mother of God, and secured Mary's protection for life. When a Protestant sought her hand, she steadily refused to marry 'an enemy of God and His Church,' and shortly afterwards, as the loving and beloved wife of the Baron de Chantal, made her house the pattern of a Christian home. But God had marked her for something higher than domestic sanctity. Two children and a dearly loved sister died; and in the full tide of prosperity her husband's life was taken by the innocent hand of a friend. For seven years the sorrows of her widowhood were increased by ill-usage from servants and inferiors, and the cruel importunities of friends, who urged her to marry again. Harassed almost to despair by their entreaties she branded on her heart the name of Jesus, and in the end left her beloved home and children to live for God alone. She was to found with S. Francis de Sales a great Order. Sickness, opposition, want, beset her, and the death of children, friends, and of S. Francis himself followed, while eighty-seven houses of the Visitation rose under her hand. Nine long years of interior desolation completed the work of God's grace; and in her seventieth year, S. Vincent of Paul saw at the moment of her death her soul ascend, as a ball of fire, to heaven.

## Fortitude.

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Profit by the successive trials of life to gain the strength and courage of S. Jane Frances, and they will become stepping-stones from earth to heaven.

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‘Lord Jesus, may Thy will be done, with no ifs, with no buts, with no exceptions,—be it for father, for children, for myself, or for any other thing whatever.’—*S. Jane Frances de Chantal*.

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It was on the 19th of March, 1609, that Madame de Chantal bade farewell to her family and relations. Pale and with tears in her eyes she passed round the large room, sweetly and humbly taking leave of each. Her son, a boy of fifteen, used every entreaty, every endearment, to induce his mother not to leave them, and at last passionately flung himself across the door of the room. In an agony of distress she passed on over the body of her son to the embrace of her aged and disconsolate father. The anguish of that parting reached its height when, kneeling at the feet of the venerable old man, she sought and obtained his last blessing, promising to repay in her new home his sacrifice by her prayers. Well might S. Francis call her ‘The valiant woman.’

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‘So Isaac, so Jacob, so Moses, and all that have pleased God, passed through many tribulations, remaining faithful.’—*Judith viii. 23.*

August 22.

## **S. Symphorian, Martyr.**

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**ABOUT** the year 180 there was a great procession of the heathen goddess Ceres at Autun in France. Amongst the crowd was one who refused to pay the ordinary marks of worship. He was therefore dragged before the magistrate and accused of sacrilege and sedition.

When asked his name and condition, he replied, 'My name is Symphorian; I am a Christian.' He came of a noble and Christian family. He was still young and so innocent, that he was said to converse with the holy angels.

The Christians of Autun were few, and little known, and the judge could not believe that the youth was serious in his purpose. He caused the laws enforcing heathen worship to be read, and looked for a speedy compliance. Symphorian replied that he must obey the laws of the King of kings. 'Give me a hammer,' he said, 'and I will break your idol in pieces.' He was scourged and thrown into a dungeon. Some days later this son of light came forth from the darkness of his prison, haggard and worn, but full of joy. He despised the riches and honours offered to him, as he had despised torments. He died by the sword, and went to the court of the heavenly King. Little more than a century later the Roman empire bowed before the faith of Christ. Many miracles spread the glory of S. Symphorian and of Christ the King of Saints.

## Loyalty to Christ.

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The Catholic religion teaches us to be subject to every rightful authority. But no earthly authority has any right against Christ and His Church. If we are accused of sedition or disobedience because we are faithful to our religion, then we must choose as S. Symphorian chose, and obey God rather than man.

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‘I fear the Almighty God who made me, and I serve Him alone.’—*S. Symphorian*.

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The mother of S. Symphorian stood on the city walls and saw her son led out to die. She knew the honours he had refused and the dishonour of his death; but she esteemed the reproach of Christ better than all the riches of Egypt, and she cried out to him, ‘My son, my son, keep the living God in your heart; look up to Him who reigns in heaven.’ Thus she shared in the glory of his passion, and her name lives with his in the records of the Church.

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‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’—*Acts v. 29.*

August 23.  
**S. Philip Benizi.**

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**S. PHILIP BENIZI** was born in Florence on the feast of the Assumption, 1233. That same day the Order of Servites was founded by the Mother of God. As an infant at the breast Philip broke out into speech at the sight of these new religious, and begged his mother to give them alms. Amidst all the temptations of his youth he longed to become himself a servant of Mary; and it was only the fear of his own unworthiness which made him yield to his father's wish, and begin to practise medicine. After long and weary waiting his doubts were solved by our Lady herself, who in a vision bade him enter her Order. Still Philip dared only offer himself as a lay-brother, and in this humble state he strove to do penance for his sins. In spite of his reluctance he was promoted to the post of master of novices; and as his rare abilities were daily discovered he was bidden to prepare for the priesthood. Thenceforth honours were heaped upon him; he became general of the Order, and only escaped by flight elevation to the Papal throne. His preaching restored peace to Italy, which was wasted by civil wars; and at the Council of Lyons he spoke to the assembled prelates with the gift of tongues. Amid all these favours Philip lived in extreme penitence, constantly examining his soul before the judgment-seat of God, and condemning himself as only fit for hell. He died, a true child of Mary, at the *Ave Maria*, on the Octave of the Assumption, 1285.

## Meditation on the Last Things.

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Endeavour so to act as you would wish to have acted when you stand before your Judge. This is the rule of the Saints, and the only safe rule for all.

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‘My God, the nearer I approach to Thee, the greater need have I to humble myself in the dust. O my God, who art Thou, and what am I?’—*S. Philip Benizi.*

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S. Philip, though he was free from the stain of mortal sin, was never weary of beseeching God’s mercy. From the time he was ten years old he said daily the Penitential Psalms. On his death-bed he kept reciting the verses of the *Miserere* with his cheeks streaming with tears; and during his agony he went through a terrible contest to overcome the fear of damnation. But a few minutes before he died all his doubts disappeared, and were succeeded by a holy trust. He uttered the responses in a low but audible voice; and when at last the Mother of God appeared before him, he lifted up his arms with joy and breathed a gentle sigh, as if placing his soul in her hand.

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‘In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.’—Ecclus. vii. 40.

August 24.

## **S. Bartholomew, Apostle.**

THERE can be little doubt that Bartholomew—that is, ‘the son of Tolmai’—one of the twelve Apostles, is the Nathanael of S. John’s gospel. He was a native of Cana in Galilee, and was one of the first disciples of Jesus. Once only is he presented to our view in the gospel and that once is in the story of his conversion. It is always instructive to note the early graces of those who were destined to do great deeds, and were most honoured by Christ. We have not far to go in search of the characteristic grace of Nathanael, for in this instance our Lord has Himself pronounced his panegyric, ‘Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.’

He is shown to us, in fact, as a simple, earnest, single-minded man, leading an unworldly quiet life, whose only power was prayer, possessing the innocence of the dove rather than the wisdom of the serpent. Of these materials the Holy Ghost fashioned a pillar of the Church, an Apostle, and a martyr.

On the dispersion of the Apostles, India fell to the lot of S. Bartholomew. After heroic labours and sufferings there he passed into Armenia where he converted many cities to the faith. At last the hostility of the pagan priesthood broke out against him. They flayed him alive, and then struck off his head, and so fulfilled for him the promises of Christ.



## Singleness of Mind.

Men of the world make much of a knowledge of its ways, but the gospel shows us the true power and nobility of simple-hearted guileless souls.

‘A pure heart penetrates heaven and hell.’—*Imitation.*

It was Philip who first said to the future apostle, ‘We have found the Messiah of whom the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth.’ Nathanael, having it in mind that the Christ was to be born at Bethlehem, and the village of Nazareth being in bad repute, answered doubtingly, ‘Can any good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip simply replied, ‘Come and see;’ and the humble-minded youth, whose single desire was to find the truth, went. When our Lord’s words of praise reached his ear, he wondered, saying, ‘Whence knowest Thou me?’ Jesus answered, ‘Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.’ The disciple saw that the secrets of his soul were read. Alone under the fig-tree, the favourite place of prayer and meditation to the devout Israelite, Nathanael had doubtless given vent to his holy aspirations. His guileless soul was discovered by the Searcher of hearts, while the grace of faith and the vocation of an apostle came to the new disciple as he cried, ‘Thou art the Son of God, the King of Israel.’

‘Think of the Lord in goodness, and seek Him in simplicity of heart.’—Wisd. i. 1.

## August 25. S. Louis, King.

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THE mother of Louis told him she had rather see him die than commit a mortal sin, and he never forgot her words. King of France at the age of twelve, he made the defence of God's honour the aim of his life. Before two years he had crushed the Albigensian heretics, and forced them by stringent penalties to respect the Catholic faith. Amidst the cares of government he daily recited the Divine Office and heard two Masses, and the most glorious churches in France are still monuments of his piety. The fearless protector of the weak and the oppressed, he was chosen to arbitrate in all the great feuds of his age between the Pope and the Emperor, between Henry III. and the English barons. In 1248, to rescue the land which Christ had trod, he gathered round him the chivalry of France, and embarked for the East. There, before the infidel, in victory or defeat, on the bed of sickness or a captive in chains, Louis showed himself ever the same, the first, the best, and bravest of Christian knights. The death of his mother recalled him to France; but when order was re-established, he again set forth on a second crusade. In August 1270 his army landed at Tunis, and though victorious over the enemy, succumbed to a malignant fever. Louis was one of the victims. He received the Viaticum kneeling by his camp-bed, and gave up his life with the same joy that he had given all else for the honour of God.

## Horror of Blasphemy.

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If we cannot imitate S. Louis in dying for the honour of God, we can at least resemble him in resenting the blasphemies offered against God by the infidel, the heretic, and the scoffer.

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When his courtiers remonstrated with Louis for his law that blasphemers should be branded on the lips, he replied, 'I would willingly have my own lips branded to root out blasphemy from my kingdom.'

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When Louis was a captive at Damietta, an Emir rushed into his tent brandishing a dagger red with the blood of the Sultan, and threatened to stab him also unless he would make him a knight, as the Emperor Frederick had Facardin. Louis calmly replied that no unbeliever could perform the duties of a Christian knight. In the same captivity he was offered his liberty on terms lawful in themselves, but enforced by an oath which implied a blasphemy, and though the infidels held their swords' points at his throat, and threatened a massacre of the Christians, Louis inflexibly refused. His dying words to his son were, 'Punish all who speak evil of God or of His Saints.'

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'And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die ; all the multitude shall stone him, whether he be a native or a stranger.'  
—Levit. xxiv. 16.

**August 26.**  
**S. Genesius, Martyr.**

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S. GENESIUS is the patron of Arles, the city of his birth and of his martyrdom, which took place about the beginning of the fourth century. He was young and still a catechumen when Christ perfected him once for all in the baptism of blood. He was employed as a writer in the law-courts, and he was there one day when the impious decrees which the emperor had issued for the persecution of the Church were read aloud. It was the business of Genesius to copy them out, but he had no heart to hear or write the words of sacrilege.

He flung down his tablets at the feet of the judge, and fled, faithful to the precept of our Lord, from the penalty that was sure to follow. Again and again he changed his hiding-place, till the persecutors gave orders that he was to be slain at once, wherever he might be found. During this time he sought the sacrament of Baptism, but was still waiting for it when overtaken by the enemy. He fled towards the Rhone, flung himself into the stream, and had just reached the other bank when he was struck down by the sword. In one moment he became a member of the Church on earth, for which he shed his blood, and passed to the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.

## Love of the Church.

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The martyrs loved the Church even unto death, and when persecution did its worst they were certain of the final victory. Learn this love and confidence from their example, and ask it through their intercession.

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‘At present the old age of the Church is assailed, but let her not fear. Let Israel comfort herself, let the Church console herself with the examples of the past.’—*S. Augustine.*

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Persecutions pass away, but yet the Church of Christ endures, and those who have loved her best are held even upon earth in perpetual honour. In the time of Genesius the city of Arles stood upon either side of the Rhone. The stain of his blood was preserved on the side where he fell ; his relics were enshrined upon the other, in order that each part of the city might secure his patronage. Two illustrious bishops of the city, S. Honoratus and S. Hilary, were buried by his side as in a sacred place. The latter of these tells us that about the year 427 he saw a bridge over the Rhone break under the multitude who were crossing ; they were saved from drowning by the invocation of S. Genesius.

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‘For no man ever hated his own flesh ; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church ; because we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.’—Eph. v. 29, 30.

August 27.

**S. Joseph Calasanctius.**

S. JOSEPH CALASANCTIUS was born in Arragon, A.D. 1556. When only five years old he led a troop of children through the streets to find the devil and kill him. He became a priest, and was engaged in various reforms, when he heard a voice saying, 'Go to Rome,' and had a vision of many children who were being taught by him and by a company of angels. When he reached the Holy City, his heart was moved by the vice and ignorance of the children of the poor. Their need mastered his humility, and he founded the Order of Clerks Regular of the Pious Schools. He himself provided all that was necessary for the education of the children, receiving nothing from them in payment, and there were soon above a thousand scholars of every rank under his care. Each lesson began with prayer. Every half hour devotion was renewed by acts of faith, hope, and charity, and towards the end of school-time the children were instructed in the Christian doctrine. They were then escorted home by the masters, so as to escape all harm by the way. But enemies arose against Joseph from among his own subjects. They accused him to the Holy Office, and at the age of eighty-six he was led through the streets to prison. At last the Order was reduced to a simple congregation. It was not restored to its former privileges till after the Saint's death. Yet he died full of hope. 'My work,' he said, 'was done solely for the love of God.'

## Teaching Children.

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‘My children,’ said the Curé of Ars, ‘I often think that most of the Christians who are lost are lost for want of instruction ; they do not know their religion well.’

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‘O Jesus, great indeed is the love which Thou bearest to the children of men, since the most signal service which we can render Thee is to leave Thee for the love of them.’—*S. Teresa.*

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Soon after the Pious Schools were founded, a bishop was passing by a garden in Rome when he heard the voice of a little child reciting an act of contrition. He turned, and saw the child's father hanging from a tree in imminent peril. The attendants rescued the father ; and then the bishop asked the child where he had learned the prayer. The boy said that he went to the Pious Schools, where he was taught in every danger to make an act of contrition to God. Thus did his children console S. Joseph amid the martyrdom which he suffered for their sake.

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‘How great things He commanded our fathers to make known to their children, that they may put their hope in God, and may not forget His works.’—Ps. lxxvii. 5, 7.

August 28.

## **S. Augustine of Hippo.**

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S. AUGUSTINE was born in 354, at Tagaste in Africa. He was brought up in the Christian faith, but without receiving baptism. An ambitious schoolboy of brilliant talents and violent passions, he early lost both his faith and his innocence. He persisted in his irregular life until he was thirty-two. Being then at Milan professing rhetoric, he tells us that the faith of his childhood had regained possession of his intellect, but that he could not as yet resolve to break the chains of evil habit. One day, however, stung to the heart by the account of some sudden conversions, he cried out, 'The unlearned rise and storm heaven, and we, with all our learning, for lack of heart lie wallowing here.' He then withdrew into a garden, when a long and terrible conflict ensued. Suddenly a young fresh voice (he knows not whose) breaks in upon his strife with the words, 'Take and read ;' and he lights upon the passage beginning, 'Walk honestly as in the day.' The battle was won. He received baptism, returned home, and gave all to the poor. At Hippo, where he settled, he was consecrated bishop in 395. For thirty-five years he was the centre of ecclesiastical life in Africa, and the Church's mightiest champion against heresy ; whilst his writings have been everywhere accepted as one of the principal sources of devotional thought and theological speculation. He died in 430.



## Reading the Lives of the Saints.

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Read the lives of the Saints, and you will find that you are gradually creating a society about you to which in some measure you will be forced to raise the standard of your daily life.

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‘There was opened to me, on that side whither I had turned my face, but was afraid to go, the chaste majesty of Continence, calm, and modestly glad, with honest solicitations winning me to come and not to linger, and reaching out, to receive and embrace me, kind hands full of throngs of good examples. So many boys and girls, so many young people, and of every age, grave widows and aged virgins. And in all these Continence was not barren, but the fruitful mother of joys begotten of Thee, O Lord, their spouse. And she mocked me in hortatory wise, as though she said, “What these men and women did, canst not thou?”’—*S. Augustine.*

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Augustine, when introduced by a friend to the life of S. Anthony, was extremely affected by it. It was one main cause of his entering upon the agony which issued in his conversion.

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‘O, how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory! for the memory thereof is immortal : because it is known both with God and with men.’—*Wisdom iv. 1.*

August 29.  
**S. Phocas, Martyr.**

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S. PHOCAS was a gardener, who cultivated a small piece of land near Sinope in Pontus, about the year 300. He gave to the poor what he could spare from the fruits of his toil, his house was open to every wayfarer, and he spent the last evening of his life in entertaining the men who sought his blood. His was a time when the heathen rulers hunted everywhere for the lives of Christians, and Phocas, in spite of his humble condition, was well known for his virtues. The lictors who were sent in quest of him were at a loss to find his house, and they came there for food and shelter, not dreaming it was his. He gave them hospitality with his usual readiness, and when he asked their errand, they answered that they were looking for Phocas, and begged his help. The servant of God invited them to rest there that night, promising to be their guide next day. After they had retired to rest he dug his own grave, made everything ready for his burial, and prepared his soul for death.

When the morning broke, and the lictors, ready to set out again, asked his assistance to find Phocas, 'I,' said the Saint, 'am he; do what you have to do.' In spite of their amazement and horror at staining their hands with the blood of their host, they obeyed the order given them. They severed his head from his body, and rewarded him unawares for his hospitality by procuring him the martyr's crown.

## Works of Mercy.

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Make a fixed rule of giving alms according to your means, remembering that this is the way Christ gives you of securing your own salvation. 'Blessed,' He says, 'are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' He will give you the grace of a good death in reward for your charity to others.

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'It is almost impossible for a man who gives alms to be lost.'—*S. Jerome.*

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The head of S. Phocas was preserved at Rome, parts of his relics were placed in other churches, and devotion to him spread all over the world. The sailors on the Black Sea and the Mediterranean chose him as their special patron. The Saint often came to help them in their need, and they preserved by a pious and touching custom the memory of his special virtue. Day by day on their voyage they used to set aside a portion of each meal for the martyr, nor would they touch it themselves till they had laid by the small coin which was its equivalent. On reaching port they distributed the whole sum thus collected among the poor.

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'Alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting.'—Tobias xii. 9.

August 30.  
**S. Rose of Lima.**

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THIS lovely flower of sanctity, the first canonized Saint of the New World, was born at Lima in 1586. She was christened Isabel, but the beauty of her infant face earned for her the title of Rose, which she ever after bore. As a child, while still in the cradle, her silence under a painful surgical operation proved the thirst for suffering already consuming her heart. At an early age she took service to support her impoverished parents, and worked for them day and night. In spite of hardships and austerities, her beauty ripened with increasing age, and she was much and openly admired. From fear of vanity she cut off her hair, blistered her face with pepper and her hands with lime. For further security she enrolled herself in the Third Order of S. Dominic, took S. Catherine of Siena as her model, and redoubled her penance. Her cell was a garden hut, her couch a box of broken tiles. More than once, when she shuddered at the prospect of a night of torture, a voice said, 'My Cross was yet more painful.' The Blessed Sacrament seemed almost her only food. Her love for It was intense. When the Dutch fleet prepared to attack the town Rose took her place before the tabernacle, and wept that she was not worthy to die in Its defence. All her sufferings were offered for the conversion of sinners, and the thought of the multitudes in hell was ever before her soul. She died A.D. 1617, at the age of thirty-one.

## Earnest Penance.

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Rose, pure as driven snow, was filled with deepest contrition and humility, and did constant and terrible penance. Our sins are continual, our repentance passing, our contrition slight, our penance nothing. How will it fare with us?

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‘Would you win heaven? you must be generous, and toil hard and suffer much, for the reward which God has prepared is itself exceedingly great.’—*S. Rose.*

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Under her habit Rose wore a hair-shirt studded with iron nails, while, concealed by her veil, a silver crown armed with ninety points encircled her head. Her body was racked by the pains of sickness, she was insulted and persecuted by her friends, and for fifteen years suffered fearful desolation of spirit. Yet she never lost the sweet calm of her soul; clinging to God by bare faith, she cried out year after year, ‘Lord, increase my sufferings, and with them Thy love in my heart.’ At length, amidst heavenly lights and consoling visions, the answer came from the lips of Jesus, ‘Rose of My Heart, be thou My spouse,—*Rosa cordis mei tu mihi sponsa esto.*’

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‘Therefore I reprehend myself, and do penance in dust and ashes.’—Job xlii. 6.

**August 31.**  
**Ven. Juvenal Ancina.**

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ANCINA was a physician in Turin. One day the 'Dies Iræ,' sung at a Requiem, revealed to him the vanity of earthly things, and he went to Rome to seek a more perfect life. While in doubt as to his future he entered the church of the Oratory, and made the acquaintance of S. Philip, by whose advice he entered the Congregation in 1568, being then thirty-three. His first care was to acquire thoroughly the spirit of the Institute, to follow in all things the common way, and to be a burden to none. By these means he became universally loved. In 1586 he was sent to Naples to help the newly-founded Community. He laboured there unweariedly for ten years, exerting himself especially in favour of young men, whom he won in numbers to God. In 1596 the promotion of Baronius to the cardinalate led to his recall to Rome; and in 1597 Clement VIII. named him to the see of Saluzzo in Piedmont, then devastated by the Swiss heretics. Ancina fled from Rome, and protested in every way against his elevation, but procured only a delay; and in 1602 he was consecrated bishop, with his intimate friend S. Francis of Sales. After one year of his pastoral rule, Saluzzo became again Catholic in faith and morals. But the bishop's zeal made him enemies: a monk, whom he had reproved for his scandalous life, found means to administer to him a poisoned drink in the refectory. He died in a few hours, surrounded by his chapter, August 31st, 1604.

## Brotherly Love.

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Ancina practised S. Philip's maxim, to think nothing of life or reputation when it was a question of converting a sinner or drawing a soul to Christ.

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'Among all the holy and eminent men whom I met in Rome, the virtues of F. Ancina shone conspicuous. He had that sincere love of God and of his neighbour, in which we see not a single thought of self, an exaltation of soul only to be found in the most perfect. Although a most devoted son of his own dear Congregation of the Oratory, he was accustomed to praise the manner of life of all kinds of religious Communities as warmly as if he himself had been a member of each. In 1603 I visited him in his diocese, and could not help remarking the reverence and love his flock bore him. Nor can I express their enthusiastic kindness to me as their pastor's friend.'—*S. Francis of Sales*.

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Ancina well knew his murderer, and every circumstance necessary to convict him, but his charity forbade even his name to be mentioned. His clergy, following his example, would not permit his body to be opened, nor any steps to be taken to discover the crime. Hence the Saint has lost the earthly glory of the martyr's crown, but he reigns in heaven with those who have shed their blood for Christ.

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Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend.'—John xv. 13.

## September 1.

### S. Odo of Canterbury.

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THE father of Odo was a pagan Dane settled in England, and he disinherited his son because he saw him inclined towards the Christian faith. Odo was then taken up by Athelm, a Saxon noble, who had him instructed and baptised, and educated him for the priesthood. In the year 887 Athelm went on a pilgrimage to Rome, bearing to the Pope the offerings of King Alfred and of his Saxon subjects. Odo accompanied him as his chaplain, and rewarded his patron's kindness by miraculously raising him from a bed of sickness. So greatly was he revered for his wisdom and holiness that on his return he was made Bishop of Shirburne ; and to his prayers and counsels the king ascribed a great victory which he won over the pagans A.D. 938. When named Archbishop of Canterbury he took the habit of S. Benedict. He discharged every duty of a good pastor, and was noted of all for his holiness, his prudence, and his firmness. He was the inflexible enemy of all wrong ; he pruned away abuses and restored discipline amongst the clergy, and was the friend and patron of S. Dunstan. Neither smiles nor threats could make him swerve from the right way, because he feared nothing and desired nothing : he disarmed all his foes. It was thus that he rebuked and vigorously resisted the young King Edwy, who was giving public scandal. He died about A.D. 958, and his name was long held in benediction as Odo the Good.



## Fraternai Correction.

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‘In correcting,’ said S. Philip, ‘we should use all possible gentleness and meekness, always remembering that, if similarly tempted, we should ourselves have fallen yet more gravely.’

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‘In correction we must love the person while we rebuke the fault, lest perchance correction pass into cruelty, and we destroy him whom we would amend. Let, then, thy gentleness be wary, and not remiss; and thy correction firm, but not severe.’—*S. Gregory.*

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The young King Edwy had, it would seem, married a person so nearly related to him that the marriage was null and void. He refused to separate from her, and on the very day of his coronation insulted and scandalized his nobles by leaving them and retiring with his pretended wife. S. Odo sent S. Dunstan to remonstrate in private with the king, and bring him back. Edwy gave way, but in revenge banished S. Dunstan. S. Odo resisted Edwy in this and many other evil acts, until, by his mingled gentleness and decision, he compelled him to yield obedience to the laws of God and the Church.

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‘Before thou inquire, blame no man; and when thou hast inquired, reprove justly.’—*Ecclus. xi. 7.*

## September 2.

### **S. Stephen, King.**

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GEYSA, fourth duke of Hungary, was, with his wife, converted to the Faith, and saw in vision the martyr S. Stephen, who told him that he should have a son, who would perfect the work he had begun. This son was born A.D. 977, and received the name of Stephen. He was most carefully educated, and succeeded his father at an early age. He began to root out idolatry, suppressed a rebellion of his pagan subjects, and founded monasteries and churches all over the land. He sent to Pope Sylvester, begging him to appoint bishops to the eleven sees he had endowed, and to bestow on him, for the greater success of his work, the title of king. The Pope granted his requests, and sent him a cross to be borne before him, saying that he regarded him as the true apostle of his people. His devotion was fervent. He placed his realms under the protection of our Blessed Lady, and kept the feast of her Assumption with peculiar affection. He gave good laws, and saw to their execution. Throughout his life, we are told, he had Christ on his lips, Christ in his heart, and Christ in all he did. His only wars were wars of defence, and he was always successful. God sent him many and sore trials. One by one his children died, but he bore all with perfect submission to the will of God. He died on his favourite feast of the Assumption, A.D. 1038.

## Obedience to the Holy See.

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‘Our duty,’ says F. Newman, ‘is to follow the Vicar of Christ whither he goeth, and never to desert him, however we may be tried ; but to defend him at all hazards and against all comers, as a son would a father, and as a wife a husband, knowing that his cause is the cause of God.’

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‘We must reverence the Christ of the earth.’—*S. Catherine of Siena.*

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When S. Stephen was about to die, he summoned the bishops and nobles, and gave them charge concerning the choice of a successor. Then he urged them to nurture and cherish the Catholic Church, which was still as a tender plant in Hungary, to follow justice, humility, and charity, to be obedient to the laws, and to show ever a reverent submission to the Holy See. Then, raising his eyes towards heaven, he said, ‘O Queen of Heaven, august restorer of a prostrate world, to thy care I commend the Holy Church, my people and my realm, and my own departing soul.’ And then he died in peace.

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‘He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne ; and He shall be a priest upon His throne.’—Zach. vi. 13.

## September 3. **S. Michael of the Saints.**

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**MICHAEL** was a native of Spain. While yet a mere child he made a vow of chastity, and when his father, hearing of it, jestingly proposed marriage to him, he ran sobbing to our Lady's altar, and there more fervently reiterated his vow. At the age of six he ran away from home to lead the life of a hermit. His father brought him back, and apprenticed him to a merchant, whom Michael served faithfully, though he spent all his leisure time in church, and was even then found in ecstasy before the Blessed Sacrament. When not yet twelve years old he again stole away secretly, and this time entered the Trinitarian Order at Barcelona, and in due time was solemnly professed. A few months after his profession a call from God led him to exchange into the stricter 'disalced' branch of the same Order. The vow of virginity which he had made in childhood, and now renewed for life, was blessed by God. He never had one temptation of the flesh, or a single impure thought. Still he chastised his body with constant austerities. For years he deprived himself of bed or pillow, and literally had not where to lay his head. The Blessed Sacrament was the aim of all his devotions. For It he strove to be mortified, fervent, chaste; and his love at times forced him to rush into the open air, and to act like one demented. He spent his life in labouring in the hospitals and prisons, and died, aged thirty-three, A. D. 1635.

## Preparation for Holy Communion.

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The Saints made their whole lives a preparation for Communion, and never felt themselves prepared. We give a short half hour, and are perfectly content.

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‘Do therefore what lieth in thee, and do it diligently ; not out of custom, nor from necessity, but with fear, reverence, and affection receive the Body of thy beloved Lord God, who vouchsafeth to come to thee.’—*Imitation*.

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Many persons condemned S. Michael’s extraordinary devotion before the Blessed Sacrament, calling it exaggeration and hypocrisy. Among these was a careless priest named Fernandez. One day, when S. Michael was preaching on preparation for Holy Communion, Fernandez sat by listening with inward derision. Suddenly he saw the Saint raised above the pulpit, and heard him say in a tone of great contrition, ‘Woe ! woe is me !’ These words, and the rapture that accompanied them, struck deep into the heart of Fernandez, for he felt that they expressed his own state. He repented sincerely of all his irreverences towards our Lord, and for the rest of his life was fond of repeating the words which had so moved his soul.

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‘And the work is great, for a house is prepared, not for man, but for God.’—I Par. xxix. 1.

September 4.  
**S. Rose of Viterbo.**

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ROSE was born in the spring of 1240, a time when Frederick II. was oppressing the Church, and many were faithless to the Holy See. The infant at once seemed filled with grace ; with tottering steps she sought Jesus in His tabernacle, she knelt before sacred images, she listened to pious talk, retaining all she heard, and this when she was scarcely three years old. One coarse habit covered her flesh ; fasts and disciplines were her delight. To defend the Church's rights was her burning wish, and for this she received her mission from the Mother of God, who gave her the Franciscan habit, with the command to go forth and preach. When hardly ten years old, Rose went down to the public square at Viterbo, called upon the inhabitants to be faithful to the Sovereign Pontiff, and vehemently denounced all his opponents. So great was the power of her word, and of the miracles which accompanied it, that the Imperial party, in fear and anger, drove her from the city. Exile only opened a wider sphere for her zeal, and she continued to preach incessantly from place to place, till Innocent IV. was brought back in triumph to Rome, and the cause of God was won. Then she retired to a little cell at Viterbo, and prepared in solitude for her end. She died in her eighteenth year. Not long after, she appeared in glory to Alexander IV., and bade him translate her body. He found it as the vision had said, but fragrant and beautiful, as if still in life.

## Use of Present Time.

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Rose lived but seventeen years, saved the Church's cause, and died a Saint. We have lived, perhaps, much longer, and yet with what result? Every minute something can be done for God. Let us be up and doing.

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'To-morrow never becomes to-day, nor does presently become now. Through this evil custom of saying "to-morrow," "presently," each "to-day" and each "now," when present, brings forth a new "to-morrow" and another "presently."'—*F. Scupoli.*

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If God gives us a particular work to do, He will most certainly enable us to accomplish it, however unsuitable the time and circumstances may appear. One day, when Rose was insisting, in the square of Viterbo, on the duty of being loyal Catholics, the crowd became so great that but few could hear her words. Still she preached on, and gradually the stone on which she was standing rose from the ground, and, remaining suspended in the air, supported the holy child in view of all till her discourse was finished, when it gently descended to its place.

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'Behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation.'—2 Cor. vi. 2.

## September 5.

### S. Laurence Giustiniani.

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LAURENCE from a child longed to be a Saint; and when he was nineteen years of age there was granted to him a vision of the Eternal Wisdom. All earthly things paled in his eyes before the ineffable beauty of this sight, and as it faded away a void was left in his heart which none but God could fill. Refusing the offer of a brilliant marriage, he fled secretly from his home at Venice, and joined the Canons Regular of S. George. One by one he crushed every natural instinct which could bar his union with his Love. In the incessant combat which he now waged with himself he measured his sufferings with the crucifix, their duration with the eternity for which he sighed. In sickness he bore unflinchingly wounds which the surgeon trembled to inflict. He begged alms of his brother nobles, and stood their scorn unmoved. As superior and as general he enlarged and strengthened his Order, and as bishop of his diocese, in spite of slander and insult, thoroughly reformed his see. His zeal led to his being appointed the first patriarch of Venice, but he remained ever in heart and soul a humble priest thirsting for the sight of heaven. At length the eternal vision began to dawn. 'Are you laying a bed of feathers for me?' he said. 'Not so; my Lord was stretched on a hard and painful tree.' Laid upon the straw, he exclaimed in rapture, 'Good Jesus, behold I come.' He died A.D. 1435, aged seventy-four.



## Desire of Divine Wisdom.

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Ask S. Laurence to vouchsafe you such a sense of the sufficiency of God that you too may fly to Him and be at rest. —

‘Why seekest thou rest to thy mind sometimes in this object and sometimes in that? What thou desirest is to be found only with Me: behold it is in My hands. Seek it in Me, who am the wisdom of God. Take Me for thy spouse and thy portion, and thou shalt have treasures inestimable.’—S. *Laurence Giustiniani*. —

When Laurence first entered religion a nobleman went to dissuade him from the folly of thus sacrificing every earthly prospect. The young monk listened patiently in turn to his friend’s affectionate appeal, scorn, and violent abuse. Calmly and kindly he then replied. He pointed out the shortness of life, the uncertainty of earthly happiness, and the incomparable superiority of the prize he sought to any his friend had named. The nobleman could make no answer; he felt in truth that Laurence was wise, himself the fool. He left the world, became a fellow-novice with the Saint, and his holy death bore every mark that he too had secured the treasures which never fail.

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‘I have loved Wisdom, and have sought her out from my youth, and have desired to take her for my spouse, and I became a lover of her beauty.’—Wisdom viii. 2.

## September 6.

### **S. Augustine, Apostle of England.**

‘THE history of the Church,’ says Bossuet, ‘has nothing grander than the entry of the holy monk Augustine into the kingdom of Kent with his forty companions, preceded by the cross and image of the great King, our Lord Jesus Christ, and solemnly praying for the conversion of England.’ Augustine was prior of the monastery of S. Andrew on the Coelian, and was appointed by S. Gregory the Great chief of the missionaries whom he sent to England. Landing at Ebbsfleet, between Sandwich and Ramsgate, they met King Ethelbert and his thanes under a great oak-tree at Minster, and announced to him the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Instant and complete success attended their preaching. On Whit Sunday, 596, King Ethelbert was baptized, and his example was followed by the greater number of his nobles and people. By degrees the faith spread far and wide, and Augustine as Papal Legate set out on a visitation of Britain. He failed in his attempt to enlist the Britons of the west in the work of his apostolate, through their obstinate jealousy and pride; but his success was triumphant from south to north. S. Augustine died after eight years of evangelical labours. The Anglo-Saxon Church, which he founded, is still famous for its learning, zeal, and devotion to the Holy See, while its calendar commemorates no less than 300 Saints, half of whom were of royal birth.

## Humble Obedience.

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The work of an apostle is the work of the right Hand of God. He often chooses weak instruments for His mightiest purposes. The most sure augury of lasting success in missionary labour is obedience to superiors and diffidence in self.

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‘Strenuously humble thy heart in the midst of thy miracles and signs, and beware thou seek not thy own glory therein. Whilst God giveth thee such favours, search thyself inwardly, and recognize what thou truly art.’—*S. Gregory to S. Augustine.*

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S. Augustine and his companions, having heard on their journey many reports of the barbarism and ferocity of the pagan English, were afraid, and wished to turn back. But S. Gregory replied, ‘Go on, in God’s name! The greater your hardships, the greater your crown. May the grace of Almighty God protect you, and give me to see the fruit of your labour in the heavenly country! If I cannot share your toil, I shall yet share the harvest, for God knows that it is not good-will which is wanting.’ The band of missionaries went on in obedience, and conquered.

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‘By the obedience of one, many shall be made just.’—Rom. v. 19.

## September 7.

### S. Camillus of Lellis.

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THE early years of Camillus gave no sign of sanctity. At the age of nineteen he took service with his father, an Italian noble, against the Turks, and after four years' hard campaigning found himself, through his violent temper, reckless habits, and inveterate passion for gambling, a discharged and penniless soldier. A few words from a Capuchin friar brought about his conversion, and he resolved to become a religious. Thrice he entered the Capuchin novitiate, but each time an obstinate wound in his leg forced him to leave. He repaired to Rome for medical treatment, and there took S. Philip as his confessor, and entered the hospital of S. Giacomo, of which he became in time the superintendent. The carelessness of the paid chaplains and nurses towards the suffering patients now inspired him with the thought of founding a congregation to minister to their wants. With this end he was ordained priest, and in 1586 his community of the Servants of the Sick was confirmed by the Pope. Its usefulness was soon felt, not only in hospitals, but in private houses. Summoned at every hour of the day and night, the devotion of Camillus never grew cold. With a woman's tenderness he attended to the needs of his patients. He wept with them, consoled them, and prayed with them. He knew miraculously the state of their souls ; and S. Philip saw angels whispering to two Servants of the Sick who were consoling a dying person.

## Reverence for the Sick.

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S. Camillus venerated the sick as living images of Christ, and by ministering to them in this spirit did penance for the sins of his youth, led a life precious in merit, and from a violent and quarrelsome soldier became a gentle and tender Saint.

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‘Charity seeks not its own convenience. We must give the spur to this jade of a body of ours, to make it trot on and get forwards. The good soldier dies in battle, the good sailor on the sea, and the good minister of the sick in the hospital.’  
—*S. Camillus.*

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One day a sick man said to the Saint, ‘Father, may I beg you to make up my bed, it is very hard?’ Camillus replied, ‘God forgive you, brother. You beg me! Don’t you know yet that you are to command me, for I am your servant and slave?’ ‘Would to God,’ he would cry, ‘that in the hour of my death one sigh or one blessing of these poor creatures might fall upon me!’ His prayer was heard. He was granted the same consolations in his last hour which he had so often procured for others. In the year 1614 he died with the full use of his faculties, after two weeks’ saintly preparation, as the priest was reciting the words of the ritual, ‘May Jesus Christ appear to thee with a mild and joyful countenance!’

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‘I was naked, and you covered Me; sick, and you visited Me.’—Matt. xxv. 36.

## September 8.

### **S. Henry, Emperor.**

HENRY, Duke of Bavaria, saw in a vision his guardian S. Wolfgang pointing to the words 'After six.' This moved him to prepare for death, and for six years he continued to watch and pray, when at the end of the sixth year he found the warning verified in his election as emperor. Thus trained in the fear of God, he ascended the throne with but one thought—to reign for His greater glory. The pagan Slaves were then despoiling the empire. Henry attacked them with a small force; but Angels and Saints were seen leading his troops, and the heathen fled in despair. Poland and Bohemia, Moravia and Burgundy, were in turn annexed to his kingdom; Pannonia and Hungary won to the Church. With the faith secured in Germany, Henry passed into Italy, drove out the Antipope Gregory, brought Benedict VIII. back to Rome, and was crowned in S. Peter's by that Pontiff in 1014. Like holy David, Henry employed the fruits of his conquests in the service of the temple. The forests and mines of the empire, the best that his treasury could produce, were consecrated to the sanctuary. Stately cathedrals, noble monasteries, churches innumerable, enlightened and sanctified the once heathen lands. In 1022 Henry lay on his bed of death. He gave back to her parents his wife, S. Cunegunda, 'a virgin still, as a virgin he had received her from Christ,' and surrendered his own pure soul to God.

## Offerings for the Sanctuary.

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S. Henry deprived himself of many things to enrich the house of God. We clothe ourselves in purple and fine linen, and leave Jesus in poverty and neglect.

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‘For here all our wealth is treasured; here lies all our hope . . . and if peace were truly kept among us, what other house should we need? And the truth of this is proved by the 3000 and the 5000 who had but one house, one table, and one soul.’—*S. John Chrysostom.*

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It was Henry’s custom on arriving in any town to spend his first night in watching in some church dedicated to our B. Lady. As he was thus praying in S. Mary Major’s, the first night of his arrival in Rome, he ‘saw the Sovereign and Eternal Priest Christ’ Jesus enter to say Mass. SS. Laurence and Vincent assisted as deacon and sub-deacon. Saints innumerable filled the church, and angels sang in the choir. After the Gospel an angel was sent by our Lady to give him the book to kiss. Touching him lightly on the thigh, as the angel did to Jacob, he said, ‘Accept this sign of God’s love for your chastity and justice;’ and from that time the emperor always halted.’

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‘I saw the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.’—Apoc. xxi. 2.

## September 9.

### B. Peter Claver.

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PETER CLAVER was a Spanish Jesuit. In Majorca he fell in with the holy lay-brother Alphonsus Rodriguez, who, having already learned by revelation the saintly career of Peter, became his spiritual guide, foretold to him the labours he would undergo in the Indies, and the throne he would gain in heaven. Ordained priest in New Granada, Peter was sent to Cartagena, the great slave-mart of the West Indies ; and there he consecrated himself by vow to the salvation of those ignorant and miserable creatures. For more than forty years he laboured in this work. He called himself 'the slave of the slaves.' He was their apostle, father, physician, and friend. He fed them, nursed them with the utmost tenderness in their loathsome diseases, often applying his own lips to their hideous sores. His cloak, which was the constant covering of the naked, though soiled with their filthy ulcers, sent forth a miraculous perfume. His rest after his great labours was in nights of penance and prayer. However spent he might be, when news arrived of a fresh slave-ship, B. Peter immediately revived, his eyes brightened, and he was at once on board amongst his dear slaves, bringing them comfort for body and soul. A false charge of reiterating baptism for a while stopped his work. He submitted without a murmur till the calumny was refuted, and then God so blessed his toil that 40,000 negroes were baptized before he went to his reward in 1654.



## Charity to our Neighbour.

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When you see any one standing in need of your assistance, either for body or soul, do not ask yourself why some one else did not help him, but think to yourself that you have found a treasure.

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‘Do thou seek nothing in this world save that which Jesus Christ Himself has sought—to sanctify souls, to work, to suffer, nay, to die for their salvation.’—*B. Peter Claver.*

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When Easter came, B. Peter left the town to search the mountains for the negroes who might be scattered among them. The tropical storms drenched him to the skin, but he never turned nor stopped. When he found a settlement he would never leave it till the last negro was brought to the Sacrament of Penance. He once suddenly left the house where he was staying, and plunged without guide or road into impracticable mountain recesses. None knew whither or why he went; but when he returned pale and worn, it was discovered that he had gone to administer the last Sacraments to three old negroes who had been abandoned by all the world, and had crawled into a ruined hut to die.

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‘Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not on fire?’—2 Cor. xi. 29.

September 10.

**S. Nicholas of Tolentino.**

BORN as one out of due time in answer to the prayer of a holy mother, and vowed before his birth to the service of God, Nicholas never lost his baptismal innocence. His austerities were conspicuous even in the austere Order—the Hermits of S. Augustine—to which he belonged, and to the remonstrances which were made by his superiors he only replied, ‘How can I be said to fast, while every morning at the altar I receive my God?’ He shed constant tears while meditating on the sacred Passion, especially at the thought of those who are still in sin. Thus too he conceived an ardent charity for the Holy Souls, so near and yet so far from their Saviour; and often after his Mass it was revealed to him that the souls for whom he had offered the Holy Sacrifice had been admitted to the presence of God. Amidst his loving labours for God and man he yet was haunted by one fear—his own sinfulness. ‘The heavens,’ said he, ‘are not pure in the sight of Him whom I serve; how then shall I, a sinful man, stand before Him?’ As he pondered on these things, Mary, the Queen of all Saints, appeared before him. ‘Fear not, Nicholas,’ she said; ‘all is well with you: my Son bears you in His Heart, and I am your protection.’ Then his soul was at rest; and he heard, we are told, the songs which the angels sing in the presence of their Lord. He died September 10th, 1310.

## A Good Death.

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Would you die the death of the just? there is only one way to secure the fulfilment of your wish. Live the life of the just. For it is impossible that one who has been faithful to God in life should make a bad or an unhappy end.

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‘I only love life because it leads quickly to death.’—*S. Nicholas of Tolentino*.

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In the midst of his agony the face of the Blessed Nicholas became radiant with joy, and he saw in vision our Lord, His Blessed Mother, and S. Augustine inviting him to join them. Then embracing a relic of the true Cross he cried, ‘Hail, holy Cross, found worthy to bear the Ransom of the world, which lay on thee! May that Ransom, even Jesus Christ, by thee defend me from the enemy of my soul!’ And so saying he rendered up his spirit to God.

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‘The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them.’—*Wisd. iii. 1.*

## September 11.

### B. Charles Spinola.

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THE fame of the martyrdom of F. Rodolph Aquaviva, in 1583, on the island of Salsette reached the ears of a young Genoese nobleman, who was being educated under the care of his uncle, the Cardinal Archbishop of Nola. Rodolph was of a great Neapolitan house, and the news rang through the kingdom. Charles Spinola heard it as a call to follow, and became himself a novice in the Society of Jesus. The thirst for suffering made him invoke the martyrs of his Order, that his craving might be satisfied. He implored to be sent to the Indies, and sailed from Lisbon, only to be driven about on the Atlantic from Guinea to Brazil, until he was captured off the Azores by an English buccaneer, and carried to our shores. After strange adventures he got free, started for the East, and through perils by storms and pestilence reached at last the coast of Japan, where persecution had begun to rage. Yet for twenty years he laboured there. At last he was captured and thrown into the horrid prison of Omuca—an open cage, where thirty-two Christians were packed together—and for four years exposed to heat, cold, and hunger, and tormented by loathsome stench and vermin. Then at last came the crown, on a height near the Martyrs' Hill at Nangasaki. B. Charles, the first in the long line, was the first to fall into the slow fire which crawled up the stakes to which he and his fifty companions were attached.

## Love of Suffering.

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So deeply was B. Charles steeped in the wisdom of the Cross that he not only courted suffering in every way, and bore it when most crushing, but even in the prison of Omuca—more terrible, as he said, than death by fire—he added cruel austerities to its long-drawn tortures.

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‘When, O my God! did I ever deserve so great a favour as to be made worthy to suffer ignominy for the name of Jesus? O well-spent toil endured in the long road from Italy to Japan! O well-paid fatigue, even though that does not follow which I so much desire, and which has nerved me to come hither!’—*From a letter of the Saint.*

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As B. Charles was awaiting the torch he saw in the enclosure of the place of execution the wife of his former host, who had come to win her crown. ‘Where is my Ignatius?’ he asked—a child born while he was in the house, and baptized by him. ‘What have you done with him?’ ‘Here he is,’ she answered, holding up her boy. ‘I have brought him with me to offer him to God, from whom I received him.’ The little fellow asked the father’s blessing; saw his mother’s head roll at his feet, and then manfully bowed his own to receive the stroke of the sword.

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‘For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.  
—Phil. i. 21.

## September 12.

### S. Guy of Anderlecht.

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As a child Guy had two loves, the church and the poor. The love of prayer growing more and more, he left his poor home at Brussels to seek greater poverty and closer union with God. He arrived at Laeken near Brussels, and there showed such devotion before our Lady's shrine that the priest besought him to stay and serve the church. Thenceforth, like another Samuel, Guy dwelt in the house of the Lord, often spending whole nights before Jesus in the tabernacle. By day he still found time and means to befriend the poor, so that his almsgiving became famous in all those parts. A merchant of Brussels, hearing of the generosity of this poor sacristan, came to Laeken and offered him a share in his business. 'Thus,' he said, 'you will be enabled to help all and to refuse none.' Guy could not bear to leave the church; but the offer seemed providential, and he at last closed with it. Their ship, however, was lost on the first voyage; and on returning to Laeken, Guy found his place filled. The rest of his life was one long penance for his inconstancy. He was twice at Rome, twice at Jerusalem; and for seven years visited the chief shrines of the Saints, imploring their intercession. About the year 1033, finding his end at hand, he returned to Anderlecht, in his own country. As he died a light shone round him, and a voice was heard proclaiming his eternal reward.

## Reverence for the House of God.

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Jesus was only nine months in the womb of Mary, three hours on the Cross, three days in the sepulchre: but He is always in the tabernacle. Does our reverence before Him bear witness to this most blessed truth?

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‘And let us be filled with zeal, brethren, for the house of God; in that house of prayer, where the Body of Christ is consecrated, and the angels are ever present, let us strive with all our might that nothing unfitting be done, or any hindrance placed to our own prayer or to that of our brother.’—*V. Bede.*

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While Guy was sacristan at Laeken his great joy was to be always in the church, sweeping the floor and ceiling, polishing the altars, and cleansing the sacred vessels. On holidays he would wreath the altar-rails with garlands of fresh flowers, and hang green branches here and there, so that the very walls might keep the feast. And he did all with the same recollectedness which had been remarked in him at his first coming. So that men were attracted to the service of God, not only by the beauty of the church, but still more by the loving reverence of him who adorned it.

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‘The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up.’—  
John ii. 17.

September 13.

## **B. Azevedo and Companions.**

S. FRANCIS BORGIA, when General of the Society of Jesus, sent the Portuguese F. Azevedo to inspect the Jesuit missions in Brazil. On his return, F. Ignatius begged for fresh labourers for that vineyard, and a large number volunteered for the post of danger. The ship which carried Ignatius and thirty-nine of his brethren parted company on the voyage from the rest of the squadron, and was attacked off the Canary Islands by the noted Huguenot pirate, Jacques Sourie. His well-armed vessels, after a brief but hard-fought battle, soon overmastered the Portuguese merchantman. In the midst of the fray stood F. Azevedo clasping in his arms a painting of our Lady of S. Mary Major's. His head was cleft to the brain. 'Angels and men are my witnesses,' he cried aloud, 'that I die for the defence of the Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church.' The conquerors vented their fury against the lay-brothers and novices, who were on deck serving the wounded and cheering the dying. One after another they were stabbed and thrown into the sea. The youngest victims still remained. Their superior had secreted them in the hold, where they were found in prayer before a picture of our Lady. Dragged on deck, they were set to work at the pumps; then meat was offered to them. It was an abstinence-day, and they flung it overboard. Wounded, insulted, they were at length cast into the sea, and forty in all received their crown.



## Constancy in the Faith.

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Among so many, so young in years and in religious life, left without a priest or senior to guide them, in the midst of ferocious men, not one showed signs of failing. What a reproach is their fortitude to our fear of men !

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‘He who is strong in love stands firm in trials. As I am beloved by Him in times of prosperity, so too I am not ill-loved in times of adversity.’—*Imitation.*

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When the vessel was captured, a novice, Simon de Acosta, who had not yet put on the habit, and whose dress and looks betokened the son of wealthy parents, was sent off to the ship of Jacques Sourie, the pirates hoping that he could give information about the merchandise on board the vessels. Sourie took him aside, and asked him if he too were a Jesuit. The young man, without a moment’s hesitation, declared that he was the brother in religion of those who had just been put to death for the faith ; and at once his head was struck off, and his body thrown into the sea.

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‘Count it all joy when you shall fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience, and patience hath a perfect work.’—James i. 2-4.

September 14.

**S. Catherine of Genoa.**

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'No more of the world, O my God ; no more sin.' Such were the words with which Catherine, at the age of twenty-six, gave herself irrevocably to God. Noble in birth, rich, and exceedingly beautiful, she had as a child rejected the solicitations of the world, and begged her Divine Master for some share in His sufferings. When only thirteen years of age, she sought admission into a convent of strict observance, but was refused on account of her youth. Three years later, she found herself promised in marriage to a young nobleman of dissolute habits, who treated her with such harshness that, after five years, wearied out by his cruelty, she somewhat relaxed the strictness of her life, and entered into the worldly society of Genoa. At length, enlightened by Divine grace as to the danger of her state, she resolutely broke with the world, and gave herself up to a life of rigorous penance and prayer. The charity with which she devoted herself to the service of the hospitals, undertaking the vilest of offices with joy, induced her husband to amend his evil ways and make a good death. Her heroic fortitude was sustained by the constant thought of the Holy Souls, whose sufferings were revealed to her, and whose state she has described in a treatise full of heavenly wisdom. A long and grievous malady during the last years of her life only served to perfect her union with God ; till, worn out in body and purified in soul, she breathed her last on Sept. 14th, 1510.

## Thought of Purgatory.

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The constant thought of purgatory will help us, not only to escape its dreadful pains, but also to avoid the least imperfection which hinders our approach to God.

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‘O miserable men ! why have you let yourselves be so blinded by this world as to make no provision for that imperious need at the hour of death ? The very goodness of God under which you shelter yourselves will rise up in judgment against you for having rebelled against the will of so good a Lord.’—*S. Catherine of Genoa.*

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‘No tongue can express,’ said the Saint, ‘no mind can understand, how dreadful is purgatory. Its pain is like that of hell ; and yet (as I have said) I see any soul with the least stain of imperfection accept it as a mercy, not thinking it of any moment when compared with being kept from its Love. It appears to me that the greatest pains the souls in purgatory endure proceed from their being sensible of something in themselves displeasing to God, and that it has been done voluntarily against so much goodness : for, being in a state of grace, they know the truth, and how grievous is any obstacle which does not let them approach to God.’

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‘If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities ; Lord, who shall stand it ?’—Ps. cxxix. 3.

September 15.

## **S. Speratus and the Martyrs of Scillita.**

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AT the beginning of the third century twelve Christians, of whom three were women, came before the pro-consul at Carthage on trial for their faith. They belonged to Scillita, a town of pro-consular Africa. The pro-consul promised them forgiveness if they changed their minds and consented to worship the gods. But Speratus, one of the martyrs, said, speaking for them all: 'We have done no crime, and we have harmed no one; nay, when we have had to bear wrong from others, we have given God thanks.'

When, at another time, they were offered mercy, they spoke of the Christian dispensation, the true mystery of mercy, and they told the pro-consul that the religion of Christ deserved to be followed, and not to be deserted. 'I am a Christian,' said Vettia, an aged woman; 'that is the only thought of my heart, the only language of my lips.' They were offered time for consideration. But they answered that they had considered once for all, before they came to baptism, and renounced the devil to follow Christ. They went forth to die, giving thanks to Christ, and their last words were: 'To-day we enter heaven as martyrs—thanks be to God.' Cardinal Baronius, that great disciple of S. Philip, re-discovered the acts of their martyrdom, and thought them 'more precious than any treasure.'

## Perseverance.

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Beg of God, through the intercession of these holy martyrs, the gift of perseverance. Their example will supply you with an admirable rule for obtaining this crowning gift. Remember that you have renounced the world and the devil once for all at your baptism. Do not hesitate ; do not look back ; do not listen to suggestions against faith or virtue. But advance, day by day, along the road which you have chosen, to God, who is your portion for ever.

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‘When the Saints pray in the words which Christ taught, they ask for little else than the gift of perseverance.’—*S. Augustine.*

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The Romans called the firmness of the Christians obstinacy, but it was an obstinacy which amazed them, for the strength of their empire failed in the attempt to overcome it. ‘I see,’ the pro-consul said to Speratus, ‘that you still persevere in your Christianity.’ ‘This perseverance,’ Speratus answered, ‘comes from no strength of mine : it is the gift of God.’ In the strength of this divine gift the early Christians overcame the world : and so shall we if we pray constantly for the grace of perseverance. It is a grace which we cannot merit. God keeps it in His own hands, and gives it to those who pray.

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‘He who shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved.’—Matt. xxiv. 13.

September 16.

**S. Cyprian, Bishop, Martyr.**

CYPRIAN was an African of noble birth, but of evil life, a pagan, and a teacher of rhetoric. In middle life he was converted to Christianity, and whilst yet a catechumen embraced a life of continence, and sold his estates for the benefit of the poor. Very shortly after his baptism he was ordained priest and made Bishop of Carthage, notwithstanding his resistance. He was given up to works of charity ; and his letters concerning the reconciliation to the Church of those who had fallen during time of persecution are a monument of charity tempered by prudence. When the persecution of Decius broke out, he fled from his episcopal city, that he might be the better able to minister to the wants of his flock, but returned on occasion of a pestilence. Later on he was banished, and saw in a vision his future martyrdom. Being recalled from exile, sentence of death was pronounced against him, which he received with the words 'Deo gratias.' His great desire was to die whilst in the act of preaching the faith of Christ ; and he had the consolation of being surrounded at his martyrdom by crowds of his faithful children, who all desired to die with him. He ordered twenty-five gold pieces to be given to his executioner, himself bandaged his eyes, and requested a priest and deacon to tie his hands. He was beheaded on the 14th Sept. A.D. 258, and was buried with great solemnity. Even the pagans respected his memory.

## Mercy.

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The duty of almsgiving is declared both by nature and revelation : by nature, because it flows from the principle imprinted within us of doing to others as we would they should do to us ; by revelation, in many special commands of Scripture, and in the precept of Divine charity which binds us to love God for His own sake, and our neighbour for the sake of God.

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‘Let not that sleep in thy coffers which may be profitable to the poor. When a man has that with which he must necessarily at some time part, he does wisely so to distribute it as to obtain from God an eternal reward.’—*S. Cyprian*.

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During the plague, S. Cyprian assembled the people, and taught them out of holy Scripture the immense value which God sets upon works of charity. He urged them to show themselves true children of their heavenly Father, ‘who makes His sun to rise on the just and the unjust.’ All gladly obeyed his exhortations : the rich, by giving abundant alms ; and the poor, by giving their personal attendance, not only to the faithful, but also to the pagans who were sick.

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‘He that hath pity on the poor honoureth his Maker.’—Prov. xiv. 31.

## September 17. S. Hildegard.

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S. HILDEGARD was born A.D. 1098, of noble and virtuous parents, and educated in a convent by a holy relation, whom she succeeded as abbess. There she grew in all graces and virtues; though her sufferings were so continuous that 'her whole life was the image of a blessed death.' As abbess she was most exact in enforcing discipline. She read the hearts of her religious, and knew their inmost thoughts and needs; but her authority was clothed with exquisite maternal tenderness. From an early age God had favoured her with visions, which she held secret until an inner voice bade her reveal them. Her bishop submitted them to the Pope; who on the report of holy men, amongst whom was S. Bernard, wrote to her, approving them. She was consulted on matters of every kind by Popes and emperors, learned men and religious Orders; and she wrote to all, as she felt bidden, simply and frankly, as the messenger of God, without any tinge of self-consciousness. She wrote Latin with ease, though she had never learnt it; and she answered questions in theology with a precision and accuracy which showed that her wisdom was an infused gift. She holds a place high and almost unique among the holy women whom God has raised up from age to age to denounce corruptions, and to warn the rulers of the Churches of the need and duty of reform. She died at her convent near Bingen A.D. 1179.



## Unconsciousness of Self.

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‘Those who would do the work of God,’ said S. Hildegard, ‘must think what they are, what they will soon be,—mere vessels of earth, in that they are mortal men, and ignorant of heavenly things. They are as trumpets, uttering the secret things of God, not as of themselves, but as another breathes into them.’

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‘Self-elation is a steep and dizzy height, on which there is no room to build.’—*S. Hildegard.*

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‘From all parts of Gaul and Germany,’ says the biographer of the Saint, ‘came unceasing streams of persons of every condition, to whom, by the grace of God, she ministered in things earthly as in things heavenly. Many came in unbelief and of perverseness ; and knowing their hearts, she rebuked them and exhorted them, and few ever resisted the force of her pleadings. Jews even, who had come in mere curiosity or in scorn, she confuted out of their own law, and constrained to accept the faith of Christ. For she was all things to all men. She received all with lowliness and courtesy, and spoke to each according to his need and capacity, as one dead alike to earthly honour and dishonour, to every thought of self.’

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‘Go, therefore, and I will be in thy mouth ; and I will teach thee what thou shalt speak.’—Exodus iv. 12.

September 18.

## S. Joseph of Cupertino.

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LIKE his father S. Francis, God made Joseph great in His kingdom by making him like a little child. When he tried to study he fell into ecstasy. He was turned out of the Capuchins as a useless subject ; when they stript him of his habit, he said it was as if they tore off his skin. Received among the Minor Conventuals, he sought to become a priest. He could only learn one gospel—'Beatus venter.' Trusting in our Lady, he presented himself for examination ; the bishop gave him the gospel to interpret, and was satisfied. His life was a revelation of the gifts of the blessed in heaven. Fragrance sweeter than any earthly perfume exhaled from his flesh and filled the whole convent. It was calculated that he spent half his life lifted from the earth in prayer. Three times he bore men in his arms upward in his flight. The world was transformed in his sight ; when he went out, if he met a woman he would say that he had met our Lady or some saint. He looked at a flower, and then bore it upward in the air, crying, ' O God, so visible and yet forgotten.' He called the troubles of life the war of children with popguns, and obedience the carriage which took men sweetly to paradise. He died, A.D. 1663, saying, ' Cupio dissolvi ;' then, ' Victory, victory !'

## Simplicity.

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God alone is simple by essence ; those who become as little children are most like to God.

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‘With two wings man ascends above earthly things, to wit, by simplicity and purity.’—*Imitation.*

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Our Lady is the reward of those who humble themselves as little children in the kingdom of God. Once when asked what he cared for most in the world, S. Joseph answered : ‘ I desire nothing but to reside at the Grotella near the image of the Blessed Virgin, whom I venerate and love.’ When he entered the church of Assisi for the first time, and saw in the roof a picture of the Mother of God, like that of the Grotella, with a loud cry exclaiming, ‘ My Mother, thou hast followed me,’ he flew to a height of forty-four feet to meet our Lady in the air. He would accept no present but flowers, with which he adorned his picture of the Madonna. Then he said playfully : ‘ My Mother is capricious : I bring her flowers, and she does not care for them ; cherries, and she will not accept them. I ask her, then, what she desires, and she answers : ‘ It is the heart which I care for ; I feed upon the homage of the heart.’

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‘ Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is greater in the kingdom of heaven.’—Matt. xviii. 4.

## September 19. **S. Januarius, Martyr.**

MANY centuries ago S. Januarius died for the faith in the persecution of Diocletian, and to this day God confirms the faith of His Church, and works a continual miracle, through the blood which Januarius shed for Him. The Saint was Bishop of Beneventum, and on one occasion he travelled to Misenum in order to visit a deacon named Sosius. Young as Sosius was—for he died at thirty—Januarius revered his sanctity and spiritual wisdom. During this visit Januarius saw the head of Sosius, who was singing the Gospel in the church, girt with flames, and took this for a sign that ere long Sosius would wear the crown of martyrdom. So it proved. Shortly after Sosius was arrested, and having confessed the faith steadfastly, in the midst of extreme tortures, he was thrown into prison. There his friend S. Januarius visited and encouraged him, till the bishop also was arrested in turn. Soon the number of the confessors was swollen by some of the neighbouring clergy. Together they were led in chains to Puteoli. They were exposed to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre. The beasts, however, did them no harm; and at last the governor of Campania, afraid of the effect which the miracle might have upon the crowd, ordered them to be beheaded. Little did the heathen governor think that he was the instrument in God's hand of ushering in the long succession of miracles which attest the faith of Januarius.

## Joy in the Faith.

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Thank God who has given you superabundant motives for your faith; and pray for the spirit of the first Christians, the spirit which exults and rejoices in belief.

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‘When heretics are brought into comparison with Christ, nothing equal nor like are they found to work. But there is no numbering the graces which the Church receives from God. She, in clearness and purity and openness, directing her prayers to the Lord, and invoking the name of Christ, works miracles for the good of men.’—*S. Januarius*.

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The relics of S. Januarius rest in the cathedral of Naples. He is the special patron of that city, which he has saved again and again from destruction in the eruptions of Mount Vesuvius; and it is at Naples that the liquefaction of his blood occurs. To this standing miracle the most illustrious men in Christendom have borne witness, and the ingenuity of heretics has vainly tried to explain it by natural causes. The blood is congealed in two glass vials. But when it is brought near the martyr’s head it melts and flows like the blood of a living man. ‘It is,’ says Baronius, ‘as if the blood were impatient for the moment of the resurrection, when it will flow through the body which God will raise in the glory of incorruption.’

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‘Thus saith the Lord, Is My hand shortened and become little, that I cannot redeem?’—Isai. l. 2.

## September 20. **S. Aidan, Bishop.**

AIDAN was a monk of the island of Hy or Iona. From this great monastic establishment, founded by S. Columba, went forth many bishops and preachers into all the land as far as the Tyne. At the invitation of Oswald, King of Northumbria, Aidan undertook the conversion of that country; and, while he was still imperfect in the English tongue, the king himself would act as his interpreter. The Saint travelled everywhere on foot, urging the faithful to frequent the Sacraments, and the heathen to give alms and do good. Whatever he taught he practised; and though he rebuked the powerful with true priestly authority, he administered his reproofs in a spirit of such Christlike meekness, humility, and sweetness, that none ever took offence. He fixed his episcopal see at Lindisfarne, afterwards called 'Holy Island,' from the number of Saints who were nursed and trained in the monastery founded there by the Saint; whence also sprang the noble monasteries which, in later years, covered the country from the Tyne to the Forth, and owned Holy Island as their mother-house. Aidan's converts were known for the fervour and austerity of their lives; even the laity of the north fasted on all Wednesdays and Fridays the greater part of the year. S. Aidan died A.D. 631, and S. Cuthbert, then a shepherd-boy in Lauderdale, saw his soul ascending to heaven, and was inspired to renounce the world. He was buried in his church in Holy Island.

## Meekness.

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The meek and humble are the great spiritual conquerors of the earth. The less of human feeling we put into our efforts for souls, the more the Spirit of God works in us and for us. Not merely interior pride, but interior impatience, should be carefully mortified by all who seek to gain souls.

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‘It is better to make penitents by gentleness than hypocrites by severity.’—*S. Francis of Sales.*

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When an apostolic missionary complained once that the English of Northumbria were obstinate, barbarous, and wild, S. Aidan said, ‘It seemeth to me, my brother, that you have been too harsh with your uncultured hearers. According to the admonition of the Apostle you should have given them first the milk of mere easy teaching, that, being thus gradually fed and strengthened by the Word of God, they might, little by little, be led to understand the deep things and perform the perfect things of His holy law.’ Whereupon the whole of his brethren judged that he himself was the one who ought to be sent to preach to the Northumbrians.

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‘The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace.’—Ps. xxxvi. 11.

September 21.

**S. Matthew, Apostle.**

ONE day, as our Lord was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw, sitting at the receipt of custom, Matthew the publican, whose business it was to collect the taxes from the people for their Roman masters. Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me;' and leaving all, Matthew arose and followed Him. Now the publicans were abhorred by the Jews as enemies of their country, outcasts, and notorious sinners, who enriched themselves by extortion and fraud. No Pharisee would sit with one at table. Our Saviour alone had compassion for them. So S. Matthew made a great feast, to which he invited Jesus and His disciples, with a number of these publicans, who henceforth began eagerly to listen to Him. It was then, in answer to the murmurs of the Pharisees, that He said, 'They that are in health need not the physician. I have not come to call the just, but sinners to penance.'

After the Ascension, S. Matthew remained some years in Judæa, and there wrote his Gospel, to teach his countrymen that Jesus was their true Lord and King, foretold by the Prophets. His devotion was to the majesty of Christ, the Sovereign of our hearts, who spoke with authority and claims obedience from His creatures, and who one day will come again to judge the whole world. S. Matthew afterwards preached the faith far and wide, and is said to have finished his course in Parthia.



## Obedience to Divine Calls.

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Obey all inspirations of our Lord as promptly as S. Matthew, who, at a single word, 'laid down,' says S. Bridget, 'the heavy burden of the world to put on the light and sweet yoke of Christ.'

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'He who has promised pardon to the sinner who does penance has not promised a to-morrow in which to do it.'—*S. Gregory.*

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S. Matthew told S. Bridget, as she one day prayed before his tomb, that before his vocation he had the good intention to wrong no one, and was looking about for an opportunity to be rid of his dangerous employment, so as to adhere to God with his whole heart. The call to follow Christ so inflamed his soul, and the words of the Divine Preacher were so precious to him, that from that moment he thought no more of earthly riches than of so much straw. He could only weep with joy that our Lord had deigned to call so mean a person and so great a sinner to His grace.

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'No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.'—*Luke ix. 62.*

September 22.

## **S. Thomas of Villanova.**

S. THOMAS, the glory of the Spanish Church in the sixteenth century, was born A.D. 1488. He was educated at Alcalá under the eye of Cardinal Ximenes, and professed philosophy there and at Salamanca. A thirst for the science of the Saints led him after two years to resign his dignities, and to enter the house of the Austin Friars in the latter city. It was in the chair of truth that the fervour of his charity became first publicly known. Crucifix in hand he would fall into rapture, exclaiming, 'O Christian, look here, look here!' Charles V. listened to him as an oracle, and appointed him Archbishop of Valencia. On being led to his throne in church, he pushed the silken cushions aside, and with tears kissed the ground. His first visit was to the prison; the sum with which the chapter presented him for his palace was devoted to the public hospital. As a child he had given his meal to the poor, and two-thirds of his episcopal revenues were now annually spent in alms. He daily fed five hundred needy persons, brought up himself the orphans of the city, and sheltered the neglected foundlings with a mother's care. During his eleven years' episcopate not one poor maiden was married without an alms from the Saint. Spurred by his example, the rich and the selfish became liberal and generous; and when, on the Nativity of our Lady, A.D. 1555, S. Thomas came to die, he was well-nigh the only poor man in his see.

## Almsgiving.

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‘Answer me, O sinner!’ S. Thomas would say. ‘What can you purchase with your money better or more necessary than the redemption of your sins?’

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‘Wouldest thou that God should hear thy prayers, hear thou the voice of the poor. Wouldest thou that God should anticipate thy wants, anticipate those of the indigent, nor wait for them to beg of thee. Above all supply the needs of those who are ashamed to ask. To make these beg an alms is to make them buy it.’—*S. Thomas of Villanova.*

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S. Thomas, being warned of his coming death, prepared himself for it by a general confession and the last Sacraments; and distributing what money he had to the poor, sent his other goods to the rector of his college, except the bed on which he lay. And that he might leave the world naked as he entered it, this bed he gave to the jailer for the use of the prisoners, borrowing it of him only till he should be gone. On the morning of September 8, feeling his strength fail, he ordered Mass to be said in his presence; and after the priest’s Communion, with the words, *In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum*, he gave up his soul to God.

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‘Thy prayers and thy alms are ascended for a memorial in the sight of God.’—Acts x. 4.

September 23.

## **S. Thecla, Virgin, Martyr.**

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S. THECLA is one of the most ancient, as she is one of the most illustrious, Saints in the calendar of the Church. Even before she was a Christian she was in great repute for her skill in letters. 'And why,' says S. Methodius, 'should we speak of her proficiency in divine knowledge, since S. Paul himself instructed her in heavenly wisdom?' It was at Iconium that the great Apostle met S. Thecla, and kindled the love of virginity in her heart. She had been promised in marriage to a young man who was rich and generous. But at the Apostle's words she died to the thought of earthly espousals; she forgot her beauty; she was deaf to her parents' threats, and at the first opportunity she fled from a luxurious home and followed S. Paul. The rage of her parents and of her intended spouse followed hard upon her; and the Roman power did its worst against the virgin whom Christ had chosen for His own. She was stripped and placed in the public theatre; but her innocence shrouded her like a garment. Then the lions were let loose against her; they fell crouching at her feet, and licked them as if in veneration. Even fire could not harm her. Torment after torment was inflicted upon her without effect, till at last her Spouse spoke the word and called her to Himself, with the double crown of virginity and martyrdom on her head.

## The Power of Virginitv.

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It is purity in soul and body which will make you strong in pain, in temptation, and in the hour of death. Imitate the purity of this glorious virgin, and take her for your special patroness in your last agony.

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‘Virgins are beautiful in the eyes of God. With Him they live, with Him they converse, with Him they are occupied day and night. Their prayers are the dowry which they bring to God. He in turn attends to their desires with the affection of a spouse.’—*Tertullian*.

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S. Thecla’s victory on earth was the prelude to her power in heaven. ‘If,’ said S. Jerome to Eustochium,—‘if you love virginitv, then the Blessed Virgin will meet you accompanied by those who have imitated her purity, and S. Thecla will embrace you with joy.’ The altar where her body rested at Seleucia was covered by a cupola which was raised upon columns, and shone with silver, and this shrine was a favourite place of pilgrimage; and to this day the Church commends the souls of her children in their last agony ‘to Him who delivered Thecla from three most cruel torments.’

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‘*Incorruptio autem facit proximum esse Deo*,—Incorruption bringeth near to God.’—Wisd. vi. 20.

September 24.  
**S. Germanus, Bishop.**

IN his youth Germanus gave little sign of sanctity. He was of noble birth, and at first practised the law at Rome. After a time the emperor placed him high in the army. But his one passion was the chase. He was so carried away as even to retain in his sports the superstitions of the pagan huntsmen. Yet it was revealed to the Bishop of Auxerre that Germanus would be his successor, and he gave him the tonsure almost by main force. Forthwith Germanus became another man, and making over his lands to the Church, adopted a life of humble penance. At that time the Pelagian heresy was laying waste this country, and Germanus was chosen by the reigning Pontiff to rescue the Britons from the snare of Satan. With S. Lupus he preached in the fields and highways throughout the land. At last near Verulam he met the heretics face to face, and overcame them utterly with the Catholic and Roman Faith. He ascribed this triumph to the intercession of S. Alban, and offered public thanks at his shrine. Towards the end of his stay, his old skill in arms won over the Picts and Scots the complete but bloodless 'Alleluia' victory, so called because the newly-baptized Britons, led by the Saint, routed the enemy with the Paschal cry. Germanus visited this country a second time with S. Severus, and dealt the heresy its death-blow. He died A.D. 448, while interceding with the emperor for the people of Brittany.

## Study of Christian Doctrine.

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If we would keep our faith pure we must study its holy truths. We cannot detect falsehood till we know and love the truth ; and to us the truth is not an abstraction, but a Person, Jesus Christ, God and Man.

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‘Piety is of little avail when not directed by intelligence.’—*S. Gregory.*

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S. Germanus knew well that the best means to protect the British against heretical teachers would be a sound and careful instruction in Catholic truth. On his second visit, therefore, he established seminaries throughout the land. These schools soon became famous ; those of Ross and Hentlan on the Wye in Herefordshire alone contained one thousand scholars. Among the many Saints educated by them were SS. Maglorius, Malo, and David. ‘By means of these schools,’ says S. Bede, ‘the Church continued ever afterwards pure in the faith and free from heresy.’

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‘Hold the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me in faith, and in the love which is in Christ Jesus.’—2 Tim. i. 13.

September 25.

## **S. Pacificus of San Severino.**

THE vocation of S. Pacificus was foreshadowed in his early infancy, when he used to clothe himself in old and coarse rags, declaring that he intended to be a Franciscan. At an early age he was consigned to the care of his uncle, a priest, who treated him with great sternness. This severity, however, rapidly matured his virtues, and while still a boy his reputation for holiness was so great that his mere presence was a check on sinful words and deeds. When he was old enough he entered the Order of Franciscan Observants at San Severino, his native place. As soon as he was ordained priest he devoted his life to gaining souls for God, and travelled about the country, preaching and administering the Sacraments. After some years of this active life God called him into retirement by afflicting him with a painful malady in his legs, which almost totally deprived him of their use. From his beloved retreat he was summoned by his superiors to act as guardian of the convent of San Severino. His countrymen received him as a Saint, nor could all his humility prevent their homage. During the last thirty-five years of his life he suffered uninterruptedly; lameness, blindness, and deafness successively hindering, though they could not stop, the various works he undertook for God's glory. For this same end he worked untiringly until God called him to his peace at an advanced age, in 1653.



## Regularity of Life.

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S. Pacificus teaches us to perfect ourselves by the exact fulfilment of our individual duties, and that to fulfil them faithfully we must live by rule.

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‘The more perfectly all things are ordered the greater their perfection.’—*S. Augustine.*

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Humble S. Pacificus has left no mark on the great events of his century, as have many Saints. His great perfection lay in doing perfectly the work, humble as it might be, which lay before him. Though there are few who attained to greater spiritual heights, or were more marked by a supernatural absorption in God, still the one means he took to that end was the closest observance of the Franciscan rule. While traversing the country, converting souls, this was the theme of his discourses and exhortations—a minute faithfulness to the daily duties of life, whether in or out of the world. During his whole life in religion he was never known to infringe any one precept of either poverty or obedience, though he always interpreted the rule in the most severe and literal manner.

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‘Hold to thy rule, leave it not : keep it, for it is thy life.’—Prov. iv. 13.

September 26.

**S. Josaphat, Bishop, Martyr.**

S. JOSAPHAT KUNCEWICZ was born in Poland, A.D. 1580, of schismatic parents belonging to the Ruthenian nation. In 1595 the Ruthenian Church re-entered into communion with the Holy See. Nine years later Josaphat embraced the Catholic Faith, and became a monk in the Basilian Order. During three years he lived alone in a deserted monastery, but the fame of his virtues brought him companions. He was ordained priest, and many and wonderful miracles testified to the Spirit of God working in him. Our Lord, under the form of an infant, was seen to come from his chalice at Mass, while the most obstinate heretics yielded themselves suddenly to his arguments. In 1617 he was appointed Archbishop of Polotsk, and during six years laboured for the restoration of discipline in the monasteries and of the sacerdotal spirit among the secular clergy, who were sunk in ignorance and vice. His success filled the schismatics with fury ; they determined on his death. The Saint's palace at Vitebsk was stormed by the populace, his attendants were cut down ; lastly, the bishop himself was hacked to death by two men with hatchets, and his lifeless body was stripped and thrown into the river. Supernatural signs revealed the spot whence, after six days, it was recovered incorrupt ; and the glorious wounds of Josaphat appealing to the guilty inhabitants caused the conversion of the entire city to Catholic unity.

## Hatred of Schism.

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S. Josaphat teaches us that all outside the one fold, schismatics, heretics, or infidels, are deadly enemies of Christ's Church; and that intimacy with them is most dangerous to our souls.

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'The Apostles and their disciples had such a horror of heresy, that they would not speak one single word to those who had corrupted the truth.'—*S. Irenæus*.

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Among the conversions wrought by the martyrdom of S. Josaphat none is so wonderful as that of Meletius Smotricki. After long wavering he joined the schism, was consecrated archbishop by another schismatical prelate, and, filled with fanatical hate, took part in the martyrdom of the Saint. After this he fled to the East; disgusted however with all he saw, he returned to Poland, and secretly made his submission to the Holy See. In an unguarded moment he was betrayed into signing a recantation; but he was speedily reconciled, and the penitential zeal of his remaining years testified to the sincerity of his conversion and his filial love of the Catholic Roman Church. He died A.D. 1633.

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'If any man come to you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you.'—2 John i. 10.

September 27.

## **SS. Elzear and Delphina.**

**ELZEAR**, Count of Arian, was betrothed at the age of ten, by order of the king, to Delphina, a virtuous damsel of twelve. Three years later they were married. Delphina begged to preserve her virginity, a favour Elzear willingly granted and afterwards ratified by vow. At fifteen Elzear received supernatural favours from God, which led him to despise earth and live for heaven alone, desiring no goods but those of eternity. He faithfully observed three maxims : to avoid the smallest things displeasing to God, to offer himself fervently to God every moment, and to conceal in his heart all heavenly favours. He recited the Divine Office every day, fasted often, and wore a hair-shirt beneath his rich garments. His recreation was to converse with Delphina on Jesus Christ, the excellence of virginity, and the delights of paradise. He and his wife often passed the night in prayer, and received many divine revelations and visions. Elzear declared himself the advocate of the poor, heard their complaints at all hours, pleading their cause at court ; and he once cured by his kiss all the lepers in a hospital. Elzear died in 1323, aged thirty-nine, and appeared to Delphina, saying he enjoyed the happiness of heaven. She then sold their large estates in Naples and Provence, reducing herself to live on alms. She was called the 'saintly Countess,' and angels sang at her funeral, while all the sick who attended it were healed.

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## Desire of Heaven.

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When we expect a temporal blessing, our thoughts are full of it, and we fancy it can never come soon enough. But although we hope for heaven it does not occupy our mind, and we dread the hour of death, which is our only road to it. Let us ask S. Elzear to obtain for us some share of that longing desire for heaven which filled his soul.

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‘What a pity it is that, being placed on earth solely to merit heaven, we hardly ever speak of it ! O life, how is it employed ! O labours, how ill are they bestowed !’—S. *Elzear*.

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Elzear lived in such constant union with God that he was never without the desire for heaven. Whether he were at table, or engaged in conversation, or when his high rank required it assisting at amusements and concerts of music, amidst all the sounds of the instruments his mind was so occupied with the harmonies of heaven that he would fall into a kind of ecstasy. He assembled his household every evening to discourse to them of heaven and eternal truths, and thus enkindled in his hearers an ardent desire of perfection.

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‘Seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.’—Col. iii. 1.

September 28.  
**S. Wenceslas, Martyr.**

WENCESLAS was the son of a Christian Duke of Bohemia, but his mother was a hard and cruel pagan. Through the care of his holy grandmother, Ludmilla, herself a martyr, Wenceslas was educated in the true faith, and imbibed a special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. On the death of his father, his mother, Drahomira, usurped the government and passed a series of persecuting laws. In the interests of the faith, Wenceslas claimed and obtained, through the support of the people, a large portion of the country as his own kingdom. His mother never forgave this check to her plans. By her intrigues she secured the apostasy and alliance of her second son, Boleslas, who became henceforth her ally against the Christians. Wenceslas meanwhile ruled as a brave and pious king, provided for all the needs of his people, and when his kingdom was attacked overcame in single combat, by the sign of the Cross, the leader of an invading army. In the service of God he was most constant, and planted with his own hands the wheat and grapes for the Holy Mass, at which he never failed daily to assist. His piety was the occasion of his death. Once, after a banquet at his brother's palace, to which he had been treacherously invited, he went, as was his wont at night, to pray before the tabernacle. There, at midnight on the feast of the Angels, A.D. 938, he received his crown of martyrdom, his brother dealing him the death-blow.

## Visiting the B. Sacrament.

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S. Wenceslas teaches us that the safest place to meet the trials of life, or to prepare for the stroke of death, is before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

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‘Through the means of visiting the most Blessed Sacrament, which I practised, though with so much tepidity and in so imperfect a manner, I abandoned the world.’—*S. Alphonsus*.

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When Wenceslas was summoned by the Emperor Otho to attend the diet at Worms, he stopped on his way to visit the B. Sacrament, and in consequence arrived after the assembly was opened. Some princes of the court saw in his late entry a claim to superior rank, and refused to salute him. But the emperor, perceiving at his side two angels who were reverentially guarding him, received him with the highest honour, and placed him next himself. The servant who accompanied Wenceslas in his visits to the B. Sacrament complained of the cold which he suffered in the bitter winter nights. Wenceslas bade him tread in his footprints; he did so, and found his whole body aglow with warmth.

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‘Wheresoever the body shall be, thither will the eagles also be gathered together.’—Luke xvii. 37.

## September 29.

### S. Michael, Archangel.

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'MI-CA-EL,' or 'Who is like to God?' Such was the cry of the great Archangel when he smote the rebel Lucifer in the conflict of the heavenly hosts, and from that hour he has been known as 'Michael,' the captain of the armies of God, the type of divine fortitude, the champion of every faithful soul in strife with the powers of evil. Thus he appears in Holy Scripture as the guardian of the children of Israel, their comfort and protector in times of sorrow or conflict. He it is who prepares for their return from the Persian captivity, who leads the valiant Machabees to victory, and who rescues the body of Moses from the envious grasp of the Evil One. And since Christ's coming the Church has ever venerated S. Michael as her special patron and protector. She styles him 'the chief of the angelic hosts set over paradise, whom the citizens of heaven delight to honour; the messenger of God to the souls of the just.' She invokes him by name in her confession of sin, summons him to the side of her children in the agony of death, and chooses him as their escort from the chastening flames of purgatory to the realms of holy light. Lastly, when Antichrist shall have set up his kingdom on earth, it is Michael who will unfurl once more the standard of the Cross, sound the last trump, and binding together the false prophet and the beast hurl them for all eternity into the burning pool.



## Devotion to the Holy Angels.

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‘Whenever,’ says S. Bernard, ‘any grievous temptation or vehement sorrow oppresses thee, invoke thy guardian, thy leader ; cry out to him, and say, ‘Lord, save us, lest we perish !’

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‘Let all acknowledge S. Michael as their protector, and be devout to him, for he cannot despise those who pray to him . . . but he guards them through life, directs them on their way, and conducts them to their eternal home.’—*S. Laurence Giustiniani*.

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Many apparitions of S. Michael are recorded from the first ages of the Church. One of the most celebrated took place at Monte Gargano in Italy, A. D. 520, and is commemorated in a special office on May 8th. The feast of Michaelmas is of still earlier origin, and in Catholic times was nowhere observed with greater solemnity than in England. By the Saxon laws it was preceded by a three days’ fast, and complete abstinence from all servile work, while on the day itself every man went barefoot to church to confess. S. Michael, again, was the patron saint of our Norman kings, and the old English coin, ‘the angel,’ bore upon its face the winged figure of the great Archangel, the conqueror of the powers of hell.

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‘He hath given His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways.’—Ps. xc. i.

## September 30.

### S. Jerome, Doctor.

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S. JEROME, born in Dalmatia, A.D. 329, was sent to school at Rome. His boyhood was not free from fault. His thirst for knowledge was excessive, and his love of books a passion. He had studied under the best masters, visited foreign cities, and devoted himself to the pursuit of science. But Christ had need of his strong will and active intellect for the service of His Church. St. Jerome felt and obeyed the call, made a vow of celibacy, fled from Rome to the wild Syrian desert, and there for four years learnt in solitude, penance, and prayer a new lesson of divine wisdom. This was his novitiate. The Pope soon summoned him to Rome, and there put upon the now famous Hebrew scholar the task of revising the Latin Bible, which was to be his noblest work. Retiring thence to his beloved Bethlehem, the eloquent hermit poured forth from his solitary cell a stream of luminous writings upon the Christian world. From all quarters he was consulted as an oracle. Thirty years he thus spent in incessant activity; at one time upholding the sanctity of the monastic state, at another doing battle for the virginity of Mary, but above all delighting to discuss, interpret, and unfold the beauties of the Word of God, till in extreme old age he died in his Saviour's birthplace, A.D. 420.

## Docility of Mind.

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‘To know,’ says S. Basil, ‘how to submit thyself with thy whole soul, is to know how to imitate Christ.’

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‘If thou didst know the whole Bible by heart and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would it all profit thee without the love of God and His grace?’—*Imitation.*

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S. Jerome's life furnishes us with a memorable instance of great intellectual gifts combined with a child-like docility to the teaching of authority. He was once appealed to by rival bishops in a grave theological controversy. The learned interpreter of Scripture would not trust his own judgment, but promptly wrote for instructions to the Pope. ‘I am joined,’ he said, ‘in communion with your holiness, that is, with the Chair of Peter. Upon that Rock I know the Church is built. Whoever eats the lamb out of that house is profane. Whoever is not in the ark shall perish in the flood. . . Order me, if you please, what I shall do. . . Each party would fain draw me to itself. All the time I cease not to cry out, “Whoever is united to the Chair of Peter is mine.”’

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‘Blessed is the man whom Thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and shalt teach him out of Thy law.’—Ps. xciii. 12.

October 1.

**S. Remigius, Bishop.**

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REMIGIUS, or Remi, was born of noble and pious parents, and his greatness was foretold before his birth. At the age of twenty-two, in spite of the canons and of his own reluctance, he was acclaimed Archbishop of Rheims ; and a light that shone around his head and a fragrant oil that anointed it showed that the choice of the people was the inspiration of God. He was unusually tall, his face impressed with blended majesty and serenity, his bearing gentle, humble, and retiring. He was learned and eloquent, and had the gift of miracles. His pity and charity were boundless, and in toil he knew no weariness. His body was the outward expression of a noble and holy soul, breathing the spirit of meekness and compunction. For so choice a workman God had fitting work. The south of France was in the hands of Arians, and the pagan Franks were wresting the north from the Romans. S. Remigius confronted Clovis, their king, converted and baptized him at Christmas, A.D. 496. With him he gained the whole Frank nation. He threw down the idol altars, built churches, and appointed bishops. He withstood and silenced the Arians, and converted so many that he left France a Catholic kingdom, its king the oldest and at the time the only crowned son of the Church. He died A.D. 533, after an episcopate of seventy-four years, the longest on record.

## Humility in Honour.

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Few men have had such natural advantages and such gifts of grace as S. Remi, and few have done so great a work. Learn from him to bear the world's praise as well as its scorn with a lowly and chastened heart.

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'Humility amidst honours is the very honour of honour and the dignity of dignity itself.'—S. *Bernard*.

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The baptism of Clovis was celebrated with a magnificence befitting so solemn a crisis in the history of the Church. As he entered the church, which was hung with tapestry, blazing with lights, fragrant with incense, and echoing with the singing of psalms and litanies by the long procession of clergy, bearing the cross and the holy Gospels, his heart was so touched with the majesty of the beauty of holiness that he said to S. Remi, who was leading him paternally by the hand, 'Dear master, is not this the kingdom of God thou didst promise me?' 'No, my son,' replied the Saint; 'it is not the kingdom, but the entrance to the way which leads up to it.' The way he pointed out when he said, 'Bow thy head, thou gentle Sicambrian. He that humbleth himself is exalted.'

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'The greater thou art the more humble thyself in all things; and thou shalt find grace before God.'—Ecclus. iii. 20.

October 2.  
**S. Afra, Martyr.**

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S. AFRA is a great model of that enduring contrition and confidence in God's mercy which are the two marks of a true conversion. She was taken at Augsburg, where her life had given public scandal, and was ordered to offer sacrifice. She answered humbly that her past sins had been enough ; and added that though unworthy to die for Christ, to whom she confessed her crimes daily, still, she desired to do so, and to wash her stains in blood. In vain the judge taunted her with pretending to be a Christian. She told him that Christ came to save sinners ; and consoled herself with the thought of S. Mary Magdalen, the penitent thief, and the other examples of Christ's mercy.

After her examination she was taken to an island in the river Lech and burnt alive. To the last she persevered in prayer and penance. Her tears fell as the flames rose around her, and the Christians heard her praying aloud. 'O Lord Jesus Christ,' she said, 'Thou camest to call sinners to penance ; receive in this hour the penance of my sufferings, and save me by this fire from fire eternal. Thou alone wast offered on the Cross a victim for all. To Thee I offer myself in sacrifice. Receive me as a victim for Thy name.' The night of Afra's martyrdom, three of her servants, like herself penitents, and her mother were burnt alive for giving Christian burial to the relics of the Saint. Their feast is kept with hers.

## Penance.

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Give yourself to compunction of heart, and take your daily crosses as a penance due to your sins. You will bear them well if you bear them thus and turn them into a mark of predestination.

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‘Burn and cut and do not spare me here, if only Thou wilt spare me for eternity.’—*S. Augustine.*

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Before her martyrdom, S. Afra had given away her wealth in alms, and this with such humility that she scarcely dared to offer help to poor Christians. ‘I begged and entreated them,’ she said, ‘to condescend so far as to accept an alms at my hands and to pray God for my sins.’ Nor did she ever cease to bewail her offences. And yet, after all, this fervent penitent could not bring herself to think that she had satisfied the justice of God till He permitted her, in His mercy, to die for Him. ‘How do you know,’ the judge asked, ‘that Christ has received you into His society?’ ‘In this,’ she answered, ‘I know that God hath not cast me from His face, because He allows me to make a glorious confession of His holy name, and so to obtain, as I believe, forgiveness of my sins.’

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‘Now I am glad ; not because you were made sorrowful, but because you were made sorrowful unto penance.’—2 Cor. vii. 9.

October 3.

## **S. Thomas of Hereford.**

**THOMAS**, son of Earl-Marshal Lord Cantelupe, was brought up in the court of the pious monarch Henry III., and there received his call to the priesthood. As a young man he filled the high post of Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and was then appointed Chancellor of England. It was a time full of peril. The king was weak and timid, the barons powerful and aggressive. S. Thomas defended the rights both of Church and State, and shielded from oppression the poorest peasant in the land. To a rare firmness, prudence, and courage he united the most tender piety. His busiest days were closed with nights of prayer, while rigorous fasts preserved unsullied the innocence of his childhood. On the death of Henry, S. Thomas resigned his office, hoping to spend his remaining years in seclusion. In 1275 his appointment to the bishopric of Hereford forced him again into conflict with the powerful lords who had seized the lands of his see. After a hard fight he won the Church's cause, only, however, to begin a more painful strife. The bishops of England deputed him to carry their complaints to Rome against Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury, for interfering with their rights. The Pope received him with the respect due to a Saint, and confirmed the episcopal privileges; but the effort was too much for the bishop's failing health. He fell sick on his homeward journey, and died at Florence, A.D. 1282.



## Constancy in Duty.

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S. Thomas wished to live in holy obscurity : he was obliged, in duty, to be twice Chancellor and once bishop. He sought to live in peace with all men : he was forced into conflict with the most powerful nobles and with his own archbishop. He had hoped to die amongst his brethren in his own cell : he expired among strangers in a foreign land.

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‘Son, let not the labours which thou hast undertaken for My sake crush thee ; neither let tribulations, from whatever source, cast thee down ; but in every occurrence let My promise strengthen and console thee.’—*Imitation*.

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The Earl of Gloucester, the son-in-law of King Henry III., as the holder of Church property, was a most hostile opponent of the Saint, and at last made only partial restitution under the threat of excommunication. He stood with others in Hereford Cathedral when the Saint’s body was brought in, and went up in turn to venerate the sacred remains. As he approached the shrine the holy bones, vigilant even in death, bled profusely, so that the reliquary itself was saturated with blood. Goaded to compunction by this prodigy, he confessed his sin, made restitution in full, and began a life of sincere penance.

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‘The wicked man fleeth when no man pursueth ; but the just, bold as a lion, shall be without dread.’—Prov. xxviii. 1.

## October 4.

### **S. Francis of Assisi.**

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**S. FRANCIS**, the son of a merchant of Assisi, was born in that city A.D. 1182. Chosen by God to be a living manifestation to the world of Christ's poor and suffering life on earth, he was early inspired with a high esteem and burning love of poverty and humiliation. The thought of the Man of Sorrows, who had not where to lay His head, filled him with holy envy of the poor, and constrained him to renounce the wealth and worldly station which he abhorred. The scorn and hard usage which he met with from his father and townsmen when he appeared among them in the garb of poverty were delightful to him. 'Now,' he exclaimed, 'I can say truly, "Our Father who art in heaven."' But divine love burned in him too mightily not to kindle like desires in other hearts. Many joined themselves to him, and were constituted by Pope Innocent III. into a religious Order, which spread rapidly throughout Christendom. S. Francis, after visiting the East in the vain quest of martyrdom, spent his life like his Divine Master—now in preaching to the multitudes, now amid desert solitudes in fasting and contemplation. During one of these retreats he received on his hands, feet, and side the print of the five bleeding wounds of Jesus. With the cry, 'Welcome, sister Death,' he passed to the glory of his God October 4th, 1226.

## Poverty.

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‘My God and my all,’ S. Francis’s constant prayer, explains both his poverty and his wealth.

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‘Holy poverty is so excellent and divine a treasure that we are not worthy to possess it; for this is the heavenly virtue by which all earthly and transitory things are trodden under foot, and the soul is set free from every hindrance to its union with the eternal God.’ This is the virtue which makes the soul, while still on earth, converse in heaven with the angels. This it is which was Christ’s companion on the Cross; which was buried with Christ; which rose again with Christ; which ascended to heaven with Christ; and which even in this life makes it easy for souls enamoured of it to fly up to heaven, provided they fail not in true humility and charity.’—*S. Francis*.

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Brother Giles relates that the ants were not so dear to S. Francis as the other animals, because of their great solicitude in heaping up in summer an abundant store of grain against the winter. S. Francis used to say that he much preferred the birds, because they do not lay by anything to-day for to-morrow.

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‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’—Matt. v. 3.

October 5.

**S. Ammon, Abbot of Nitria.**

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AMMON came of a rich and noble family in Egypt. Being left an orphan, he wished to serve God in solitude; but his relations constrained him to marry. The night of their marriage Ammon read to his wife the words spoken by Jesus Christ and S. Paul in praise of virginity, and easily obtained her consent to live in perpetual continence. He also granted her prayer not to forsake her, and for eighteen years they lived together as brother and sister. Ammon rose early and spent the day in his garden, cultivating medicines for the poor. At sunset he spent some time in prayer, and joined his wife for their only daily repast of herbs or fruit. The night he passed mostly in prayer. At length his wife gave him liberty to go where God inspired him. Blessing God, he joyfully retired to the desert of Nitria. It was a barren solitude, where he hoped to live alone with God; but his sanctity became known, and before he died it was peopled for many miles with fervent solitaries, who came to live under his direction. In the year 340, when Ammon died, he was sixty-two years old, forty of which he had spent in the world. At the hour of Ammon's death St. Antony saw a glorious soul rise to heaven, while a voice said: 'That is the soul of Ammon, solitary of Nitria.'

## The Remembrance of Eternity.

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'O everlasting kingdom,' said S. Augustine; 'kingdom of endless ages, whereon rests the untroubled light and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, where the souls of the Saints are in rest, and everlasting joy is on their heads, and sorrow and sighing have fled away! When shall I come and appear before God?'

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'Eternity is stamped upon the minds of Saints by gazing on the eternity of God.'—*S. Gregory.*

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S. Hugh of Grenoble spent so much time at the Chartreuse that S. Bruno, who was his director, recommended him to return to his diocese. The Count of Nevers made a long stay with them to learn how to serve God with more fervour; and on his return home he was so affected by the remembrance of their extreme poverty, that he sent them many costly gifts and much plate. The Saint sent back the gifts, saying that they were simply useless to them. The Count then sent them a quantity of parchments and leather, to be used in copying books, by which they gained their subsistence.

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'I thought upon the days of old; and I had in my mind the eternal years.'—Ps. lxxvi. 6.

October 7.  
**S. Tarcisius, Martyr.**

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THE holy acolyte and martyr Tarcisius suffered at Rome in the persecution of Valerian and Gallienus about the middle of the third century. In those days the office of conveying the Blessed Sacrament to the imprisoned confessors of the faith was often intrusted to inferior ministers of the Church, and indeed it was frequently given into the keeping of the faithful laity, who were permitted to communicate themselves. When Tarcisius was one day bearing the Holy Eucharist he was stopped by a fierce pagan mob, who pressed him to show them what he was carrying. Mindful of our Lord's injunction not to give that which is holy to dogs, nor to cast pearls before swine, the brave boy stoutly resisted their entreaties, and soon fell beneath a shower of blows and stones. His constancy was rewarded. When his persecutors searched his lifeless remains they could not find, either in his hands or in his garments, any vestige of the Blessed Sacrament, which God had miraculously preserved from desecration. The heathen fled in terror at this sign of Divine power, and the Christians, taking up the body, buried it in the cemetery of Callistus on August 15th. The tomb was afterwards decorated with an inscription by Pope Damasus, in which he states that S. Tarcisius, 'carrying the Sacraments of Christ, chose rather to suffer death than to betray the heavenly Body to profane mad dogs.'

## Reverence for the B. Sacrament.

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‘Wouldst thou receive the life?’ says S. Augustine; ‘change, then, thine own. For otherwise thou wouldst receive life to condemnation, and wouldst obtain thereby, not health, but corruption; not life, but death.’

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‘How can he die whose food is life?’—*S. Ambrose.*

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The story of another child, condemned to die for the Holy Eucharist, is found in the records of the Church of Constantinople. It was there the custom to give to innocent children whatever particles remained after Holy Communion. Amongst these young communicants was a Jewish boy, who in good faith went up to the altar after the example of his Christian schoolfellows. On his return home his father was enraged at hearing what he had done, and cast him into a heated furnace. After some time his mother, who was in despair at his loss, heard his voice under the burning coals, and drew him forth unhurt. A bright and beautiful lady, he said, had cooled the flames around him. The boy was examined by the Emperor Justinian and the Patriarch Mennas, and he and his mother were baptized.

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‘This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it, he may not die.’  
—John vi. 50.

October 8.  
**S. Bridget of Sweden.**

BRIDGET was born of the Swedish royal family, A.D. 1304. At ten years of age she was most tenderly affected by a sermon on the Passion, and the following night saw our Lord, in a vision, covered with blood, which a voice told her was caused by the insensibility of men to His love. From this time the image of Christ crucified was ever present to her soul ; and, while working with her needle, she would shed many tears at the sight of His still bleeding wounds. In obedience to her father, she was married to Prince Ulpho of Sweden, and became the mother of eight children, one of whom, Catherine, is honoured as a Saint. After some years, she and her husband separated by mutual consent. He entered the Cistercian Order, and Bridget founded the Order of S. Saviour, in the abbey of Wastein in Sweden. In 1344 she became a widow, and thenceforth received a series of the most sublime revelations, all of which she scrupulously submitted to the judgment of her confessor. These revelations were examined and approved by the Council of Basle. By the command of our Lord, Bridget went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and amidst the very scenes of the Passion was further instructed in the sacred mysteries. Whilst enjoying the highest graces Bridget was ever most humble, gentle, and charitable, and the Bull of her canonization declares that she would not lift her eyes without the leave of her confessor. She died A.D. 1373.



## Frequent Confession.

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‘Is confession a matter of much time or expense?’ asks S. John Chrysostom. ‘Is it a difficult and painful remedy? Without cost or hurt, the medicine is ever ready to restore you to perfect health.’

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‘With every confession man draws nearer to God, gains a clearer knowledge of his interior state, becomes more active in the exercise of virtue, more fit to merit mercy, and better disposed to receive the higher gifts.’—*S. Laurence Giustiniani*.

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From her childhood, S. Bridget’s devotion to the Passion made her more and more anxious to purify her soul; she confessed very frequently, and after her husband’s death once, at least, each day. Profoundly conscious of her own sinfulness, she wept for her least faults with more bitter tears than others shed over enormous crimes. God gave her so special a horror of sin, that one careless word of hers instantly produced an acrid taste in the mouth, while the bad language of others was as sulphur in her nostrils.

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‘I said, I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord : and Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin.’—Ps. xxxi. 5.

October 9.

**S. Louis Bertrand.**

S. LOUIS was born at Valencia in Spain, A.D. 1526, of the same family as S. Vincent Ferrer. As a youth he was modest, humble, devout, and spent whole nights in the hospitals ministering to the sick. In 1545, after severe trials, he was professed in the Dominican Order, and at the age of twenty-five was made master of novices, and trained up many great servants of God. Through his whole life in religion he was consumed with an intense dread of losing the grace of God, and to secure it, he increased by heroic austerities the sufferings of constant ill health. This fear was augmented during eight years by visions of his father's pains in purgatory. When the plague broke out in Valencia he devoted himself to the sick and dying, and with his own hands buried the dead. In 1562 he obtained leave to embark for the American mission, and there evangelized immense districts, converting vast multitudes to the faith. He was favoured with the gift of miracles, and while preaching in his native Spanish, was understood in various languages. After seven years he returned to Spain, to plead the cause of the oppressed Indians, but he was not permitted to return and labour among them. He spent his remaining days toiling in his own country, till at length, in 1580, he was carried from the pulpit in the cathedral at Valencia to the bed from whence he never rose. He died on the day he had foretold—October 9th, 1581.

## The Fear of Judgment.

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The Saints fasted, toiled, and wept, not only for love of God, but for fear of damnation. How shall we, with our self-indulgent lives and unexamined consciences, face the judgment-seat of Christ?

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‘Alas, I know not on which side the sentence of my Judge will place me.’—*S. Louis Bertrand.*

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When S. Louis left his convent in Spain for the labours and sufferings of the South American mission, he was so weak that he was often obliged to lean against the walls or trees for support ; yet no amount of penance could pacify his deep fear of the judgments of God, and frequently at night, after a day of toil, the thought of the uncertainty of his salvation would cause him to tremble so violently as to shake his whole cell. Time wasted, graces squandered, besides actual sins, rose up to condemn him, and his only consolation was to prostrate himself at the foot of the crucifix, and implore the mercy of the Eternal Father through the merits and sufferings of His Son.

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‘It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.’—Heb. ix. 27.

## October 10. **S. Paulinus, Bishop.**

**PAULINUS** was one of the twelve Roman missionaries sent by S. Gregory the Great to reinforce S. Augustine in the conversion of England. After some stay among the Christian converts in Kent, he accompanied S. Ethelburga to the court of her betrothed husband, Edwin, the heathen king of Northumbria. He was already consecrated Bishop of York ; the flock was to be collected by his own exertions. It required the patience, prayer, and miraculous energy of a Saint to overcome the prejudices of Edwin, who at last consented to summon his priests and nobles to hear the new doctrines. The burning words of the missionary pierced the darkness of their souls, and the king was baptized, with numbers of his subjects, on the spot where now stands York Minster. Then Paulinus travelled through Northumbria, preaching to multitudes, and baptizing thousands in the beautiful rivers of Yorkshire, whilst Edwin and Ethelburga laboured by his side. At the end of six years an invasion of the heathen, in which Edwin was killed, forced Paulinus to retire again, with the widowed Ethelburga, to Kent. He was then appointed Bishop of Rochester, where he laboured till his death in 644. But his work in the north outlived the persecution, and aged men would tell with pride how they had been baptized by the majestic bishop, who was tall in stature, stooping from toil, but unbent in spirit, Paulinus, the Apostle of Northumbria.

## Renewal of Baptismal Vows.

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So many Saxon Christians became Saints because they did what every Christian vows to do. They renounced for ever the devil and his works, and they carried their white garment without stain before the judgment-seat of Christ.

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‘The enemy has been cast out of your hearts. You have promised to renounce him in that profession which, not man only, but God and His angels witnessed when you said, “I do renounce him.” Renounce him, then, not only in word, but in work; not only by the sound of the lips, but in every act of your life.’—*S. Augustine.*

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When the question was asked, who should destroy the pagan temples? Coifi, a heathen priest just converted by Paulinus, arose and said, ‘Who is fitter than myself to destroy, through the wisdom which God has given me, these things which I worshipped in my folly?’ And, going forth, he cast a spear into the midst of the temple, and ordered it to be burned to the ground. If we endeavoured with equal gratitude to destroy the idols of our corrupt nature, the grace of our baptism would bear more fruit.

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‘For we are buried together with Him by baptism into death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life.’—Rom. vi. 4.

October 11.  
**S. Francis Borgia.**

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FRANCIS BORGIA, Duke of Gandia and Captain-general of Catalonia, was one of the handsomest, richest, and most honoured nobles in Spain, when, in 1539, there was laid upon him the sad duty of escorting the remains of his sovereign, Queen Isabella, to the royal burial-place at Granada. The coffin had to be opened for him that he might verify the body before it was placed in the tomb, and so foul a sight met his eyes that he vowed never again to serve a sovereign who could suffer so base a change. It was some years before he could follow the call of his Lord ; at length, when his wife was dead and his children settled, he gave up all ; and where he had ruled as viceroy he went about in an old tattered habit, preaching Christ crucified to the poor peasants. He had entered the Society of Jesus to cut himself off from any chance of dignity or preferment. But his Order chose him to be its head. Francis only abased himself the more, and an ever-growing sense of his sins, though his life had always seemed so stainless, made him feel the lowest of all. The Turks were threatening Christendom, and S. Pius V. sent his nephew to gather Christian princes into a league for its defence. The holy Pope chose Francis to accompany him, and, worn out though he was, the Saint obeyed at once. The fatigues of the embassy exhausted what little life was left. S. Francis died on his return to Rome, October 10th, 1572.

## Self-Contempt.

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S. Francis Borgia learnt the worthlessness of earthly greatness at the funeral of Queen Isabella ; he learnt further the dignity of Christian humility in the meditation of our Lord's humiliation. Do the deaths of friends or the sight of the crucifix teach us aught about ourselves ?

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For six years, Francis told his novices one Maundy Thursday, he had taken his place, and the one he best deserved, at the feet of Judas ; but that day he had found Christ our Lord there—nay, washing, drying, and kissing those feet. Truly there was now no fit place left for him at all.

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A Spanish nobleman said once to the Saint, 'How can you bear the fatigues and hardships of your journeys, made as they are in such utter poverty?' 'There is nothing to be surprised at. We do not travel so unprovided as you imagine. I always send some one on before to see to lodgings and whatever else we require.' The gentleman was rather puzzled. 'Sir,' S. Francis added, 'the knowledge of myself, and the account of my demerits, which had justly deserved the flames of hell, are my outriders and foragers.'

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'He that hath been humbled shall be in glory ; and he that shall bow down his eyes, he shall be saved.'—Job xxii. 29.

## October 12.

### S. Wilfrid, Bishop.

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'A QUICK walker, expert at all good works, with never a sour face,'—such was the great S. Wilfrid, whose glory it was to secure the happy links which bound England to Rome. He was born about the year 634, and was trained by the Celtic monks at Lindisfarne in the peculiar rites and usages of the British Church. Yet even as a boy Wilfrid longed for perfect conformity in discipline, as in doctrine, with the Holy See, and at the first chance set off himself for Rome. On his return, he founded at Ripon a strictly Roman monastery, under the rule of S. Benedict, and at the Council of Whitby obtained the adoption of the Roman Easter. In 664 he was elected Bishop of Lindisfarne, and five years later was transferred to the see of York. He had to combat the passions of wicked kings, the cowardice of worldly prelates, the errors of holy men. He was twice exiled and once imprisoned; yet the battle which he fought was won. He swept away the abuses of many years and a too national system, and substituted instead a vigorous Catholic discipline, modelled and dependent on Rome. Sternly uncompromising in matters of principle, Wilfrid was a most tender father with his flock. During his exile he converted the Friesland savages by his kindly ways, and taught the men of Sussex to fish while he won their souls to God. He died Oct. 12th, 709, and at his death was heard the sweet melody of the angels conducting his soul to Christ.



## Devotion to Rome.

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To look towards Rome is an instinct planted in us for the preservation of the faith. Trust in the Vicar of Christ necessarily results from the reign of His love in our hearts.

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‘For with this Roman Church, on account of its pre-eminent principality, the whole Church (I mean the faithful on all sides) must needs agree, wherein the apostolic tradition hath ever been preserved.’—*S. Irenæus*.

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At the Council of Whitby, A.D. 664, the differences between the adherents of the Scottish and Roman usages—particularly as to the time of the observance of Easter—came to a crisis. Wilfrid concluded an enthusiastic address on the Roman side by quoting the words of our Lord to S. Peter, ‘I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,’ &c. ‘Can you,’ asked King Oswy of Colman, the leader of the other party,—‘can you show any such power given to Columba?’ He answered, ‘None,’ and admitted that the promise was made to Peter alone. ‘Then is he the doorkeeper,’ replied the king, ‘whom I will never gainsay; lest, when I come to the gates of heaven, there be none to open to me, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys.’

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‘Upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen all the day and all the night; they shall never hold their peace.’—Isai. lxii. 6.

October 13.

## **S. Edward the Confessor.**

EDWARD was unexpectedly raised to the throne of England at the age of forty years, twenty-seven of which he had passed in exile. When an infant, his mother had laid him on the altar, and solemnly offered him to God, and his holy youth showed he had not withdrawn the offering. On the throne, the virtues of his earlier years—simplicity, gentleness, lowliness—shone with new brightness, but especially angelic purity and detachment. By a rare inspiration of God, though he married to content his nobles and people, he preserved perfect chastity in the wedded state. So little did he set his heart on riches that thrice when he saw a servant robbing his treasury he let him escape, saying the poor fellow needed the gold more than he. He loved to stand at his palace-gate, speaking kindly to the poor beggars and lepers who crowded about him, and many of whom he healed of their diseases. He was laborious in his kingly duties. The long wars and the Danish oppression had brought the kingdom to a sad state. The land was half untilled, the nobles turbulent, the clergy relaxed. Edward's zeal and sanctity soon wrought a great change. His reign of twenty-four years was one of almost unbroken peace, the country grew prosperous, the ruined churches rose under his hand, the weak lived secure, and for ages afterwards men spoke with affection of the 'laws of good S. Edward.' He died January 5th, 1066.

## Love for the House of God.

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David longed to build a temple for God's service. Solomon reckoned it his glory to accomplish the work. But we, who have God made flesh dwelling in our tabernacles, ought to think no time, no zeal, no treasures too much to devote to the splendour and beauty of a Christian church.

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'The place, indeed, is awe-inspiring, and worthy of all reverence, which is the home of the faithful, the dwelling-place of angels, the very habitation of the presence of God.'—*S. Bernard*.

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The holy king had a great devotion to building and enriching churches. Westminster Abbey was his latest and noblest work. It occupied his last sixteen years, during which he spent on it the tithe of his revenues. He fell ill in the midst of the last preparations for its dedication, and even on his deathbed would make ready the sacred vessels and ornaments, and write the deeds for its endowment. He just lived to see the completion of his work of love. God rewarded him by making the glorious church he had raised the shrine of his relics; and, amid all the destruction of sacred things in England, the saintly body has remained undisturbed within it to this day.

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'I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.'—Ps. xxv. 8.

**October 14.**  
**S. Callistus, Pope, Martyr.**

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**EARLY** in the third century Callistus, then a deacon, was intrusted by Pope S. Zephyrinus with the rule of the clergy, and set by him over the cemeteries of the Christians at Rome. The charge was no light one. He who undertook it became, in a sense, the guardian and judge of his brethren, with an authority only second to that of the bishop; and, at the death of Zephyrinus, Callistus, according to the Roman usage, succeeded to the Apostolic See. A decree is ascribed to him appointing the four fasts of the Ember seasons, but his name is best known in connection with the old cemetery on the Appian Way, which was enlarged and adorned by him, and is called to this day the Catacomb of S. Callistus.

In it were laid SS. Sebastian, Cornelius, Damasus, and, as the legend over the entrance tells us, 170,000 martyrs and 46 Popes, 'whose bodies are buried in peace; who came out of great tribulation, having endured for the name of Christ the pains of death, that they might obtain an inheritance in the house of the Lord.' Callistus added another name to the list of those grand silent Pontiffs who fed and governed the flock of Christ, and at last, after the example of the Good Shepherd, whose worthy vicars they were, gave their lives for the sheep. He was martyred October 14th, 223.

## Reverence for the Holy Dead.

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In the body of a Christian we see that which has been the temple of the Holy Ghost, which even now is precious in the eyes of God, who will watch over it, and one day raise it up in glory to shine for ever in His kingdom. Let our actions bear witness to our belief in these truths.

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‘This is a great work. If we are bidden cover the naked in life, how much more the bodies of the dead ! If we are wont to shelter travellers bound for distant regions, how much more those who have departed to that eternal home whence they will never return !’—*S. Ambrose.*

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During the persecution under the Emperor Severus, S. Callistus was driven to take shelter in the poor and populous quarters of the city ; yet, in spite of these troubles, and of the care of the Church, which pressed so heavily upon him, he made diligent search for the body of Calipodius, one of his clergy who had suffered martyrdom shortly before. When he had found it he was full of joy, and buried it, with hymns of praise, in the cemetery which was afterwards called by his name.

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‘He fed the hungry, and gave clothes to the naked, and was careful to bury the dead.’—*Tobias i. 20.*

October 15.

**S. Teresa.**

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WHEN a child of seven years Teresa ran away from her home at Avila in Spain, in the hope of being martyred by the Moors. Being brought back and asked the reason of her flight, she replied, 'I want to see God, and I must die before I can see Him.' She then began with her brother to build a hermitage in the garden, and was often heard repeating 'For ever, for ever.' A foolish love for romances for a while cooled her fervour, and it was some twelve years later that she became a Carmelite nun. Frivolous conversations again checked her progress towards perfection, but at last, in her thirty-first year, she gave herself wholly to God. Terrible spiritual desolations now purified her soul. By these she learned to realize so intensely the presence of God, that all sin seemed to her committed in Him, and she said 'that we receive more harm from one venial offence than from all the powers of hell combined.' A vision showed her the very place in hell to which her own light faults would have led her; and she lived ever after in the deepest distrust of self. She was called to reform her Order, favoured with distinct commands from our Lord, and her heart was pierced with divine love; but she dreaded nothing so much as delusion, and to the last acted only under obedience to her confessors, which both made her strong and kept her safe. She died on October 4th, 1582.

## Obedience to Confessors.

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‘After all I die a child of the Church.’ These were the Saint’s last words. They teach us the lesson of her life—to trust in humble childlike obedience to our spiritual guides as the surest means of salvation.

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‘Thou preparest, O God, the ways of the obedient soul, and orderest those things we have to do, so that we find ourselves, without our knowing how, by faithfully observing for the love of God the commands laid upon us, spiritually growing and making great progress, which afterwards fills us with wonder.’—*S. Teresa.*

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‘True it is,’ said the Saint, ‘that I am the weakest and most wicked of all creatures ; but yet I believe that whoever will humble himself, though he be strong, and not trust in himself, but in one who has experience in these matters, will not lose anything. For myself I can say that if our Lord had not shown me this truth, and had not also enabled me to treat very familiarly with persons who were given to mental prayer, I should still have gone on falling and rising, till I had fallen headlong into hell. God alone it was who gave me the helping hand. May He be praised for ever! Amen.’

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‘Moreover, we have had fathers of our flesh for instructors, and we revered them. Shall we not much more obey the Father of spirits, and live?’—Heb. xii. 9.

October 16.

## **SS. Bonosus and Maximilian.**

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BONOSUS and Maximilian were officers in the 'Herculean' troops, and seem to have been intrusted with the charge of the standard. In the year 363 they were ordered, in accordance with a decree of Julian the Apostate, to remove the sign of the Cross which Constantine had set upon the imperial standard, and to put the symbol of idolatry in its place; but this they would not do. Accordingly their refusal was treated as an act of rebellion, and Julian, uncle to the apostate emperor, summoned them before his tribunal. It was in vain that Count Julian tried to terrify them by threats, and when he passed from words to deeds they bore the scourge, laden though it was with balls of lead, like men dead to pain. The cruelty of their judge did not stop here; but God stayed his hand, and showed how He knows those who honour the Cross. They were plunged into a cauldron of boiling pitch, but the pitch grew cold as they entered it, and left them unharmed. They were shut up for days in a dungeon, with nothing to eat except bread stamped with idolatrous symbols; but when the prison-doors were opened, the bread was untouched, and the martyrs, still strong and vigorous, were praising and thanking God. The miracles were attributed to magic, and Count Julian ordered the Saints to be beheaded. They received the sentence gladly, and died as they had lived, faithful to the Cross of Christ.



## Reverence for the Sign of the Cross.

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The early Christians sanctified every action with the sign of the life-giving Cross. Use it as they used it, remembering that you are the disciples of a crucified God.

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‘By the sign of the Cross deliver us from our enemies, O Lord.’—*Prayer of the Church.*

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Constantine set the Cross with the name of Christ on the imperial standards, and under this sign led his armies to victory, till the Roman world bowed before the faith of Christ. Julian the Apostate undid the work of Constantine, and re-established idolatry. But the Christians knew well that the triumphs of the Cross do not cease when men cease to honour it, and counted every martyrdom a victory of Christ's Cross. When Bonosus and Maximilian went forth to die, Meletius, the Bishop of Antioch, with other bishops and with troops of Christians, accompanied them in triumphal procession, and the whole city exulted in the glory of the martyrs.

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‘And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.’—Matt. xxiv. 30.

October 17.

## **B. Margaret Mary Alacoque.**

MARGARET MARY was born at Terreau in Burgundy, on the 22nd July, 1647. During her infancy she showed a wonderfully sensitive horror of the very idea of sin. When only twelve she prayed four hours each day, fasted thrice in the week, slept little, gave the best of her food to the poor, and wore an iron chain. She entered the Order of the Visitation, at Paray-le-Monial, in 1671, and was professed the following year. Although frequently in ecstasies, her ruling devout passion was a thirst for humiliation, and our Lord gratified her by choosing her to suffer incredible agonies as a victim of penance for others. She was afflicted with acute bodily suffering and bitter spiritual desolation, while her sisters in religion distrusted and ill-treated her. After purifying her by these trials, Jesus appeared to her in numerous visions, displaying to her His Sacred Heart, sometimes burning as a furnace, and sometimes torn and bleeding on account of the coldness and sins of men. In 1675 the great revelation was made to her that she, in union with Father de la Colombière, S.J., was to be the chief instrument for instituting the feast of the Sacred Heart, and for spreading that devotion throughout the world. Thus Margaret Mary from the disciple was made the apostle of the Heart of Jesus. Soon after saying, 'I shall not live much longer, because I have no longer anything to suffer,' she died on the 17th October, 1690.

## Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

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Love for the Sacred Heart especially honours the Incarnation, and makes the soul grow rapidly in humility, generosity, patience, and union with its Beloved.

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‘O my only love, I will endeavour to hold in subjection and submission to Thee all that is within me, doing what I believe to be most perfect or most glorious to Thy Sacred Heart, from which I promise to withhold nothing in my power, and not to refuse to do or suffer anything in order to make it known, loved, and glorified.’—*The vow of B. Margaret Mary.*

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On one occasion Margaret Mary saw in a vision the Heart of Jesus, with these words upon it : ‘My love reigns in suffering, triumphs in humility, and rejoices in unity.’ At another time the Sacred Heart appeared to her radiant with an effulgence far more dazzling than the sun ; then she saw her own heart, like a shapeless atom, trying to approach that abyss of light : it was unable to reach it until the Sacred Heart drew it into itself, and she heard these words : ‘Lose thyself in My greatness, and see that thou never come forth from it ; for if thou dost leave it, thou shalt never enter it again.’

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‘Man shall come to a deep heart, and God shall be exalted.’—Ps. lxiii. 7.

October 18.

**S. Luke.**

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S. LUKE, a physician at Antioch and a painter, became a convert of S. Paul, and afterwards his fellow-labourer. He is best known to us as the historian of the New Testament. Though not an eye-witness of our Lord's life, the Evangelist diligently gathered information from the lips of the Apostles, and wrote, as he tells us, all things in order. It is the Gospel of mercy and redemption through the Precious Blood ; and as S. Mark wrote under the influence of S. Peter, so S. Luke seems everywhere to be animated by the mind and heart of the Apostle of the Gentiles. The Acts of the Apostles were written by this Evangelist as a sequel to his Gospel, bringing the history of the Church down to the first imprisonment of S. Paul at Rome. The humble historian never names himself, but by his occasional use of 'we' for 'they' we are able to detect his presence in the scenes which he describes. We thus find that he sailed with S. Paul and Silas from Troas to Macedonia ; stayed behind apparently for seven years at Philippi, watering where the Apostle had planted ; and lastly, shared the shipwreck and perils of the memorable voyage to Rome. Here his own narrative ends, but from S. Paul's Epistles we learn that S. Luke, whom he affectionately terms 'the most dear physician,' was his faithful companion to the end. He died a martyr's death some time afterwards in Achaia.

## Devotion to the Precious Blood.

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Christ has given all He had for thee ; do thou give all thou hast for Him.

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‘Precious indeed is the Blood of Christ, for it is the blood of an immaculate body—it is the blood of the Son of God, who has redeemed us, not only from the curse of the law, but also from the perpetual death of sin.’—*S. Ambrose*.

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The emblem of S. Luke in the vision of Ezechiel is the ox, the animal of sacrifice. The Fathers of the Church saw a special fitness in this, for in the fourfold picture of the life of Christ, drawn by the Evangelists, it is the priesthood of Jesus and His shedding of blood for sinners that characterize this Gospel. The opening scene is the sacrifice of the priest Zachary, now about to make way for the sacrifice of the new law. S. Luke alone mentions the circumcision, the first blood-shedding. He alone describes the sweat of blood in the agony of the garden. The parables which he has preserved breathe the same spirit, and, like those of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, paint for us pictures of the wounds inflicted by sin, and the tender healing mercy of the Physician of our souls.

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‘Knowing that you are not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold and silver, . . . but with the Precious Blood of Christ.’—1 Peter i. 18, 19.

October 19.  
**S. Peter of Alcantara.**

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PETER, while still a youth, left his home at Alcantara in Spain, and entered a convent of Discalced Franciscans. He rose quickly to high posts in the Order, but his thirst for penance was still unappeased, and in 1539, being then forty years old, he founded the first convent of the strict observance. The cells of the friars resembled graves rather than dwelling-places. That of S. Peter himself was four feet and a half in length, so that he could never lie down, and thus he succeeded in depriving himself almost entirely of sleep, which he said is a worse enemy than death, since it robs us of the presence of God. He ate but once in three days. His sackcloth habit and a cloak were his only garments, and he never covered his head or feet. In the bitter winter he would open the door and window of his cell that, by closing them again, he might experience some sensation of warmth. He rarely raised his eyes, and for many years never saw a woman's face. His body was shrunk and withered, and his skin was like the bark of a tree; but his face shone with the love of God, and he spoke with such tenderness and unction as to melt all hearts. Amongst those whom he trained to perfection was the heroic S. Teresa. He read her soul at once, approved of her spirit of prayer, and strengthened her to carry out her reform. S. Peter died, with great joy, kneeling in prayer, October 18th, 1562, at the age of sixty-three.

## The Power of Penance.

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‘It is said,’ wrote S. Teresa of S. Peter of Alcantara, ‘that man’s health has grown feebler, and that we are not now as in the former times. But this holy man lived in our day : he had a spirit strong as those of another age, and so he trampled on the world. If men do not go about barefoot, nor undergo sharp penances, as he did, there are many ways of trampling on the world ; and our Lord teaches them when He finds the necessary courage.’

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‘O blessed penance, which has merited so great a reward.’—*S. Peter in glory to S. Teresa.*

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S. Teresa thus testifies to the power of S. Peter’s intercession : ‘Behold here, then, how that life of sharp penance is perfected in such great glory, and now he is a greater comfort to me, I do believe, than he was on earth. Our Lord once said to me that persons could not ask Him anything in S. Peter’s name, and He not hear them. I have recommended many things to him that he was to ask of our Lord, and I have seen my petitions granted. God be blessed for ever! Amen.’

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‘A faithful saying. For if we be dead with Him, we shall live also with Him : if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.’—2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

## October 20.

### S. John Cantius.

No country, perhaps, has suffered more steadfastly for the faith than Poland, and its constancy is due, under God, to the great Saints, natives of that country, whose holy lives have witnessed to the truth of Christ. Amongst these is S. John. He was born at Kenty in Poland, A.D. 1403, and studied at Cracow with great ability, industry, and success, while his modesty and virtue drew all hearts to him. He became professor and preacher, and won very great influence by his perfect consistency, 'doing as well as teaching,' and his sweetness and simplicity of manner. He was, for a short time, induced to take charge of a parish; but he shrank from the burden of responsibility, and returned to his life of professor at Cracow. There, for many years, he lived a life of unobtrusive virtue, self-denial, and charity. He slept little, and on the ground; for thirty years before his death he tasted no meat; he gave all to the poor, even the clothes and the shoes he wore. His love for the Holy See led him often in pilgrimage to Rome, on foot and alone, and his devotion to the Passion drew him once to Jerusalem, where he hoped to win a martyr's crown by preaching to the Turks. His life had no great incidents. It was so hidden, because so harmonious and simple, that after his death the miracles which attested the power of his intercession were almost as much a surprise as an edification. He died A.D. 1473, at the age of seventy.



## Simplicity.

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He who orders all his doings according to the will of God, without asking or caring what others think, may often be spoken of by the world as simple and stupid ; but, in the end, he wins the esteem and confidence of the world itself, and the approval and peace of God.

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‘No virtue is more necessary to us all than a modest simplicity.’—*S. Cyril.*

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As the Saint was going once to Rome, some robbers sprang on him, knocked him down, and demanded all his money. In his confusion, he forgot that some gold pieces were sewed up in his clothes, and said that he had no more. When they were gone, he bethought him of the hidden money, and ran after the robbers and called them from afar, and then, kneeling before them, reproached himself bitterly with the untruth he had uttered, and offered them the money he had kept back in forgetfulness. The robbers were so startled with his simplicity and innocence that they cast themselves at his feet, restored him all they had taken from him, and besought his forgiveness.

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‘A simple and upright man, fearing God and avoiding evil.’—*Job i. 8.*

## October 21. S. Hilarion, Abbot.

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S. HILARION was born of heathen parents near Gaza, and was converted while studying grammar in Alexandria. Shortly after, he visited S. Antony, and, still only in his fifteenth year, he became a solitary in the Arabian desert. He subdued the assaults of the devil and the flesh by fasting and labour, and he persevered in this life of converse with Christ till he was changed into His blessed likeness, and endowed with supernatural power and charity. The mother of three children who were dying sought his aid, and, averse as he was to the society of women, he left at her bidding the cell which he had never quitted for six-and-twenty years, and restored her children by his blessing. When those whom he cured offered him money in their gratitude, he made answer, 'Freely I have received : freely I give.' Even the heathen sought his prayers. A multitude of monks, attracted by his sanctity, peopled the desert where he lived. In consequence of this, he fled from one country to another, seeking to escape the praise of men ; but everywhere his miracles of mercy betrayed his presence. Even his last retreat at Cyprus was broken by a paralytic, who obtained his cure from S. Hilarion, and then spread the fame of the Saint. He died with the words, 'Go forth, my soul ; why dost thou doubt ? Nigh seventy years hast thou served God, and dost thou fear death ?'

## Fraternai Charity.

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It is not austerity which distinguishes the Saints of God. They were Saints because they made their austerity a means of uniting themselves to Christ, and forming themselves after the model of His humility and charity. No work is good unless it makes us grow in love to God and man.

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‘Never rejoice except when thou seest thy brother in charity.’—*A saying attributed to our Lord.*

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The monks who peopled the desert cultivated it with their own hands, and planted it with vineyards. Before the vintage, Hilarion used to visit all his brethren, passing none by, and sharing in their hospitality. He blessed the vineyard of a monk who was generous in entertaining the brethren, and cursed with barrenness the vineyard of another who was niggardly. Thus he bound them, solitaires as they were, together in fraternal charity, till the desert was changed into paradise and the wilderness blossomed like the rose.

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‘And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three. But the greater of these is charity.’  
—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

October 22.

## **S. Cæsarius of Arles.**

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CÆSARIUS had spent thirteen years in religion when he fled to escape the archbishopric of Arles. Trusting, however, to God's grace, and taking S. Augustine for his patron, he accepted the burden, and ruled that church forty years. He had an extreme horror of the least wilful sin, and aimed at perfection in all things. His first care was to provide for the daily singing of the Divine Office, at which he wished the laity to assist as often as possible. He preached himself on all Sundays and holidays, and prescribed spiritual reading after Matins and Vespers every day, 'lest his flock should faint through famine of the word of God.' His revenues, the charge of which he left entirely to others, were consecrated to Christ in the person of the sick poor ; and in the siege of Arles he melted down all the sacred vessels for their use. By his writings, and by his presidency at the Council of Orange in 529, he caused Semi-Pelagianism to be pronounced a heresy, and so dealt its death-blow. He was twice driven from his see ; but was at last set free by the Emperor Theodoric, to whom he was brought at Ravenna. 'I trembled,' said the emperor, 'when he entered my presence. He has the face of an angel.' Cæsarius went thence to Rome, where Pope Symmachus gave him the Pallium, and made him Vicar of the Apostolic See. He died on the eve of S. Augustine's feast, 542.

## Hatred of Venial Sin.

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S. Cæsarius teaches us to value as naught what good we may have done, but to hate more and more our daily imperfections, which blind the soul and dishonour the majesty of God.

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‘Venial sins are blotches, which do not indeed kill the soul, but, like some hideous leprosy, fearfully disfigure it.’—*S. Cæsarius*.

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S. Cæsarius insisted much in his sermons on the dangers of little sins, and on the fires of purgatory which await those who are careless about them. He says in one homily: ‘If any think themselves clear of the above sins, and, because they fall not into deadly crimes, glory in a perilous security on account of their innocence, let them fear lest a multitude of little sins make their life a burden, harassing and tormenting them like the teasing of flies or fleas. For just as we dread fierce and deadly beasts which kill at one bite, and shrink with horror from tiny insects which can torment us, so, by God’s grace, let us redeem both our mortal sins and our venial offences (without which we cannot live) by daily almsgiving or prayer, and above all by loving our enemies with our whole heart.’

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‘He that is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater.’—Luke xvi. 10.

**October 23.**  
**S. John Capistran.**

S. JOHN was born in 1385, at Capistrano in the kingdom of Naples. At the age of thirty the loss of his wife and an unjust imprisonment opened his eyes to the vanity of the world, and he entered the Franciscan convent at Perugia. On one meal a day, except when a particularly fatiguing journey obliged him to take a slight collation, and with his night's rest curtailed to three or four hours' sleep upon bare boards, he preached throughout Italy, Austria, Poland, and Hungary for nigh forty years. Seven thousand Hussites were prevailed upon by him to abjure their heresy, and in one sermon he converted a hundred and twenty young men and sent them into religion. His audience sometimes amounted to a hundred thousand persons. He delivered himself in such sort that even those who could not understand his language were moved to amend their lives. In 1456, at the age of seventy-one, he confronted the triumphant Turkish forces on the banks of the Danube, with some 40,000 crusaders, enlisted by himself, mostly of the poorer sort, half armed, but brimful of zeal, and brought by his exhortations to a state of almost religious discipline. These he led on, crucifix in hand, and shouting the name of Jesus, and won a complete victory against overwhelming odds. He died soon after, worn out by his exertions; his one grief being that he was not found worthy of martyrdom.

## Devotion to the Word of God.

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Some sermons are pleasanter to listen to than others; but we should try and persuade ourselves that the word of God in sermons has an especial grace over and above the merit of the preacher. Devotion to God's word is one of the signs of predestination. 'He who is of God heareth the word of God. . . . Therefore you hear it not, because you are not of God.'

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'Pay no great heed what be the defects of the preacher; if only he speak the truth, receive that truth as proceeding from God its Fountain-head, and consider not the channel through which it flows.'—*Blosius*.

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S. John Capistran's great sermons generally ended in his healing the sick that were brought to him. At one sermon in Vienna he healed twenty persons. 'To this end,' to use S. Gregory's words, 'was this coruscation of visible miracles, that they might draw the hearts of beholders to believe in what they did not see, in order that through the display of an external miracle some understanding might be obtained of the greater miracle within.'

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'Therefore we also give thanks to God without ceasing: because that when you had received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is indeed, the word of God, who worketh in you that have believed.'—1 Thess. ii. 13.

## October 24.

### S. Raphael, Archangel.

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RAPHAEL, the angel of healing, had stood for ages before the throne of God. He had fought by the side of Michael against the rebel hosts, and had joined in the song of joy at the creation of the world. And now he was to come down from heaven as a shadow of the Incarnate Word, to heal wounded hearts on earth. It was the time of the captivity of God's people in a foreign land. The good Tobias, in the midst of his works of mercy among the exiles in Nineve, had been struck with blindness. He did but renew his fasts, his alms, and his prayers. Meanwhile, Sara, a pious maiden in far-off Media, was grievously tormented by a demon who had slain each of her seven husbands on his wedding-day. In her sorrow she was mocked and insulted. But she too only prayed the more.

Now there came one day a beautiful youth to offer himself as a guide to the young Tobias, who had been sent on a distant journey by his aged father. Faithfully and kindly he fulfils his trust. He saves the lad from a monstrous fish by the river Tigris, marries him to the now comforted Sara, brings him home in safety, gives sight to the blind old man, and at length, in their transport of gratitude and joy, makes himself known : 'I am Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord.'



## Devotion to the Guardian Angel.

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Be mindful of the presence of your guardian angel, and invoke him often. It is the surest way to gain spiritual joy. —

‘Come, O angel, and receive him who is changed from his former error ; soothe him as a kind physician, and instruct him.’—*Origen*.

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When S. Raphael first beheld the elder Tobias he greeted him with this salutation : ‘ *Gaudium sit tibi semper*,—Joy be to thee always.’ ‘What joy shall be to me, who sit in darkness?’ asked the blind old man. And the angel made answer : ‘Be of good heart ; thy cure from God is at hand.’ And when again he had come back safely from his long journey with the youth, and they would both press upon him their thanks, he says : ‘Bless ye the Lord ; when thou didst pray with tears, and didst leave thy dinner to bury the dead, I offered thy prayer to God, and because thou wast acceptable to God there was need that temptation should prove thee. And now the Lord hath sent me to heal thee. Peace be to you. Fear not.’

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‘Behold I will send My angel, who shall go before thee and keep thee in thy journey. Take notice of him and hear his voice.’—Exod. xxiii.

20.

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October 25.

## **S. John of Beverley.**

THE Benedictine monasteries were to the Anglo-Saxons homes of piety, centres of industry, and schools of learning. The monk who left his cloister to rule a diocese gathered round him crowds of eager students. S. John of Beverley was one of these great monastic bishops. He spent his early years at Whitby under S. Hilda ; and was afterwards raised to the see of Hexham, and then to that of York. He there founded a school which became celebrated for its learned men, yet none were so poor or ignorant but S. John tried to instruct them also in the truths of salvation. V. Bede, one of his pupils, relates the following among many other miracles wrought by him. It was the holy bishop's custom to retire during Lent to some solitary spot ; and on one occasion he took with him a poor dumb youth to support and teach. The first week S. John spent alone in prayer with God. Then, armed with divine power, he made the sign of the Cross on the dumb boy's tongue, and bade him speak. The boy uttered the letter as he was bid, and then day by day the Saint taught him new letters and words, till at length the youth could speak without difficulty. So delighted was he with his new gift that he never ceased expressing the thought of his mind. S. John died amidst the blessings and tears of his flock, A.D. 721, and is still venerated as the special patron of the deaf and dumb.

## Fidelity to Grace.

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There is no peace except in fidelity to grace. If we fly from the crosses God lays upon us, we shall find other and heavier crosses in a life of sin. If we would regain our peace, we must return to God along the royal highway of the holy cross.

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‘Let us remember our profession and our engagements to God. We should not fly from hardships, but seek our rest in the consolations of the Lord.’  
—*S. Pachomius.*

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In his captivity, Malchus was sitting in the desert, thinking sorrowfully of his monastery and of the abbot who had been a father to him. As he meditated, he saw a troop of ants hard at work, and the peace and order with which they toiled quickened the longing for the peaceful monastery which he had deserted. It was then he resolved to trust himself to God, and to risk his life in order to join his brethren in religion.

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‘They that in vain observe vanities forsake their own mercy. But I, with the voice of praise, will sacrifice to Thee: I will pay whatsoever I have vowed.’—Jonas ii. 10.

October 27.

**S. Eustochium, Virgin.**

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S. EUSTOCHIUM was the youngest daughter of the noble Roman widow, S. Paula, S. Jerome's friend and disciple. From her infancy she showed rare intelligence and tender piety. Her mother watched over her youth with untiring care, and S. Jerome spared no pains to cultivate the soul of her whom he calls 'the flower of virgins.' When Paula gave up the honours and refinements of her position for a life of more perfect devotedness and self-sacrifice, Eustochium joyfully followed her example; and a little later, when the holy widow, bidding adieu to Rome, sailed for Palestine, she was still faithfully accompanied by her best-beloved child. Together they visited the spots consecrated by the sufferings of Christ; and Paula having founded a monastery at Bethlehem, Eustochium there took the veil. Eventually at Paula's death, she succeeded her in the government of the monastery, and gave a bright and beautiful example of penance, chastity, and generosity in the service of God. S. Jerome continued to watch over the soul which his austere teaching had first guided in the path of perfection. Many of his letters are addressed to Eustochium, and her sympathy and wisdom encouraged him in his immense labours for the translation of the Hebrew books of the Old Testament into Latin. She died in 419 at Bethlehem, and was laid by her mother's side.

## The Spirit of Sacrifice.

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Let us learn from S. Eustochium to estimate the honours and riches of this world at their true value, keeping our hearts ever fixed upon eternal joys.

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‘O my Eustochium, my daughter and my sister—for my age and my charity allow me to give you these names—if by birth you are the first among Roman virgins, strive all the more to accomplish your work to the end, and do not lose, through the folly of a half sacrifice, present and future joys.’—*S. Jerome to Eustochium.*

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Eustochium’s resolve to embrace the religious life exposed her to the angry opposition of her relations. Having carried her off by force, they dressed her in rich garments and loaded her with jewels, striving by flattery and persuasion to shake her resolution. But the young Saint’s firmness remained untroubled. As soon as she could escape, she joyfully resumed her plain brown habit, and fled to join her mother.

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‘So likewise every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be My disciple.’—Luke xiv. 33.

October 28.

## **SS. Simon and Jude.**

SIMON was a simple Galilean, called by our Lord to be one of the pillars of His Church. The Evangelists are silent about his early life, or the way in which he came to follow Christ. They record none of his sayings, but while inscribing his name in the catalogue of the Apostles, they write for us his whole character in a single word. Zelotes, 'the zealot,' was the surname which he bore among the disciples. Armed with this zeal he went forth to the combat against unbelief and sin, and made conquest of many souls for his Divine Lord.

The Apostle Jude, whom the Church commemorates on the same day, was a brother of S. James the Less. They were called 'brethren of the Lord,' on account of their relationship to His Blessed Mother. S. Jude preached first in Mesopotamia, as S. Simon did in Egypt; and finally they both met in Persia, where they won their crown together. They were united also in their characteristic graces. Men named S. Jude, Thaddeus, 'the brave;' and every line of the Catholic Epistle which he left as a precious legacy to the Church breathes the spirit of fiery and courageous zeal. With terrible threats he bids all disturbers of ecclesiastical unity beware of God's judgments; while with powerful and yet tender words he beseeches his dearly beloved to contend earnestly for the 'faith once delivered to the Saints.'

## Zeal for the Faith.

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Zeal is an ardent love which makes a man fearless in defence of God's honour, and earnest at all costs to make known the truth. If we would be children of the Saints we must be zealous for the faith.

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'Add fire to piety, and you have got zeal. With zeal your faith is secure.'—*S. Gregory Nazianzen.*

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Listen to the language of S. Jude when he describes the too common character of those who foster dissensions and schisms within the Church. They are men, he says, who defile the flesh, despise dominion, and blaspheme majesty. They are murmurers full of complaints, walking according to their own desires; their mouth speaketh proud things, admiring persons for the sake of gain. They are murderers like Cain, covetous like Balaam, rebellious like Core. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own confusion; wandering stars, to whom the storm of darkness is reserved for ever.

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'He put on justice as a breast-plate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; he put on the garments of vengeance, and was clad with zeal as with a cloak.'—Isai. lix. 17.

October 29.  
**Venerable Bede.**

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VENERABLE BEDE, the illustrious ornament of the Anglo-Saxon Church and the first English historian, was consecrated to God at the age of seven, and intrusted to the care of S. Benedict Biscop at Wearmouth. He became a monk in the sister-house of Jarrow, and there trained no less than six hundred scholars, whom his piety, learning, and sweet disposition had gathered round him. To the toils of teaching and the exact observance of his rule he added long hours of private prayer, and the study of every branch of science and literature then known. He was familiar with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. In the treatise which he compiled for his scholars, still extant, he threw together all that the world had then stored in history, chronology, physics, music, philosophy, poetry, arithmetic, and medicine. In his Ecclesiastical History he has left us beautiful lives of Anglo-Saxon Saints and holy fathers, while his commentaries on the Holy Scriptures are still in use by the Church. It was to the study of the Divine Word that he devoted the whole energy of his soul, and at times his compunction was so overpowering that his voice would break with weeping, while the tears of his scholars mingled with his own. He had little aid from others, and during his later years suffered from constant illness; yet he worked and prayed up to his last hour, and died as he had lived—ever joyful, giving glory to God.



## Desire of Heavenly Wisdom.

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‘The more,’ says the *Imitation*, ‘a man is united within himself and interiorly simple, so much the more and deeper things doth he understand without labour ; for he receiveth the light of understanding from on high.’

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‘Unhappy is the man who knoweth all other things, and knoweth not Thee ; but happy whoso knoweth Thee, though he know naught else.’—*S. Augustine*.

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The Saint was employed in translating the Gospel of S. John from the Greek up to the hour of his death, which took place on Ascension-day, A.D. 735. ‘He spent that day joyfully,’ writes one of his scholars. And in the evening the boy who attended him said, ‘Dear master, there is yet one sentence unwritten.’ He answered, ‘Write it quickly.’ Presently the youth said, ‘Now it is written.’ He replied, ‘Good ! thou hast said the truth—*consummatum est* ; take my head into thy hands, for it is very pleasant to me to sit facing my old praying-place, and there to call upon my Father.’ And so on the floor of his cell he sang, ‘Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ;’ and just as he said, ‘Holy Ghost,’ he breathed his last, and went to the realms above.

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‘Therefore the desire of wisdom bringeth to the everlasting kingdom.’—Wisdom. vi. 21.

October 30.

**B. Alphonsus Rodriguez.**

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B. ALPHONSUS was born at Segovia in Spain, 25th July, 1531. As is often the case with God's servants, he evinced remarkable virtues in his earliest childhood, especially a singular devotion to our B. Lady. While he was studying in the University of Alcala his father died, and he was called away to carry on his business in Segovia, where he was shortly afterwards married, and became the father of two children. But Alphonsus, who had always led a most holy life, was not destined to serve God in the world. He failed in business, and death deprived him of his wife and both his children. He then determined to enter the ecclesiastical state, and, while preparing for the priesthood, offered himself as a lay-brother to the Society of Jesus. This he did from humility, and under the guidance of his director. God rewarded him with a marvellous gift of prayer, and those graces of infused knowledge which flow from the immediate teaching of the Holy Ghost. In the humble office of porter of a college in the island of Majorca (such was his reputation for sanctity) he became an oracle, consulted by neighbours and important personages from a distance, in his intercourse with whom he manifested a knowledge of future events, the secret thoughts of men's hearts, and other supernatural gifts. He induced a number of people to enter the religious state, and B. Peter Claver, the Apostle of the Negroes, was among his spiritual children. He died at the age of eighty-six.

## Humble Opinion of Self.

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All men profess humility, but the Saints alone love to be humbled. Learn from B. Alphonsus to prefer always the humblest place, as the only one fitted for yourself.

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‘To try to know oneself, this is the foundation of everything. He who knows himself despises himself, while he who does not know himself is puffed up.’—*B. Alphonsus Rodriguez.*

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In 1664, when the Forty Hours’ Adoration was celebrated in the college of Majorca, the chairs were taken from all the rooms of the community for the accommodation of the crowds worshipping in the church. When the chairs were afterwards restored to the different rooms, that belonging to Brother Alphonsus was forgotten. During a whole year the good old man was left without a chair to sit down upon, or to place his clothes on when he went to bed, and had it not been carried back to his room after the return of the same feast, he would have remained perfectly content without it for the rest of his life. He never thought himself other than a poor mendicant admitted through charity, and unworthy to receive aught that was given him.

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‘He that is the lesser among you all, he is the greater.’—Luke ix. 48.

October 31.

**S. Narcissus, Martyr.**

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S. NARCISSUS was consecrated bishop of Jerusalem about the year 180. He was already an old man, and God attested his merits by many miracles, which were long held in memory by the Christians of Jerusalem. But his very virtue made him enemies, and three wretched men charged him in the presence of the Church with an atrocious crime. They confirmed their testimony by horrible imprecations: the first prayed that he might perish by fire, the second that he might be wasted by leprosy, the third that he might be struck blind, if they charged their bishop falsely. The holy bishop had long desired a life of solitude, and he withdrew secretly into the desert, leaving the Church in peace. But God spoke for him who would not speak for himself. The first of his accusers was burnt in his own house, the second became a leper, the third confessed and mourned over his guilt, but the very extremity of his contrition deprived him of sight. When Narcissus returned to Jerusalem another bishop sat in his place; but at the entreaty of his flock he resumed his office. He died in extreme old age, bishop to the last; for God, who had protected his good name, sent him, by revelation, a coadjutor to share his burden when he was unable to bear it alone.

## Trust in God.

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Let us do the work God gives us in His name, and commit the result to Him. He never fails those who trust in Him : He guides them through darkness and through trials secretly and surely to their end, and in the evening time there is light.

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‘ Lord, what Thou sayest is true : Thy care over me is greater than all the care I can take of myself. For he standeth at too great a hazard who doth not cast his whole care on Thee.’—*Imitation.*

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Among the many miracles of this saint one is recorded which illustrates that same confidence in God which sustained him under calumny. One Holy Saturday in the church the faithful were in great trouble, because no oil could be found for the lamps which were used in the Paschal feast. S. Narcissus bade them draw water from a neighbouring well : when the water was brought to him he prayed over it, and, full of faith in God, told them to put it in the lamps. It was changed into oil, and long after some of this oil was preserved at Jerusalem in memory of the miracle.

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‘ Casting all your care upon God, for He hath care of you.’—1 Peter v. 7.

## November 1. **The Theban Legion.**

THE Theban legion numbered more than six thousand men. They are said to have been converted to the faith by a Bishop of Jerusalem, but in any case they marched from the East into Gaul, and proved their loyalty at once to their emperor and their God. They were encamped near the Lake of Geneva, under the Emperor Maximian, when they got orders, as we are told by S. Eucherius, the famous Bishop of Lyons, to turn their swords against the Christian population, and refused to obey. In his fury, Maximian ordered them to be decimated. The order was executed once and again, but they endured this without a murmur or an effort to defend themselves. S. Maurice, the chief captain in this legion of martyrs, encouraged the rest to persevere and follow their comrades to heaven. 'Know, O emperor,' he said, 'that we are your soldiers, but we are servants also of the true God. In all things lawful we will most readily obey, but we cannot stain our hands in this innocent blood. We have seen our comrades slain, and we rejoice at their honour. We have arms, but we resist not, for we had rather die without shame than live by sin.' As the massacre began, these generous soldiers flung down their arms, offered their necks to the sword, and suffered themselves to be butchered in silence. They died as they had lived, faithful disciples of Him who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and was dumb as a lamb before his shearers.

## Meekness.

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Thank God for every slight and injury you have to bear. An injury borne in meekness and silence is a true victory. It is the proof that we are good soldiers of Jesus Christ, disciples of that heavenly wisdom which is first pure, then peaceable.

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‘So, O Lord, Thou wilt ever protect Thy servants. They will not lack patience in suffering or constancy in confession.’—*From the Mass of S. Maurice in the ancient Missale Gothicum.*

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Violence triumphs over meekness for a little, but in the end Christ fulfils His promise, and the meek possess the earth. Maximian was strangled at Lyons by the order of his own son-in-law, and he has earned a never-ending shame by the persecution of the Christians. But the glory of the Theban legion is eternal. In the fourth century, their resting-place was made known by revelation, and the fame of this miracle spread abroad. By the shrine of the ‘happy legion’ Sigismund, king of Burgundy, did penance for his sins and endowed a monastery. To this day, the place in which they suffered is called after S. Maurice, the chief of that brave band, which quitted an earthly service and went to praise God for ever in the multitude of the heavenly host.

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‘The Lord lifteth up the meek, and bringeth the wicked down even to the ground.’—Psalm cxlvi. 6.

## November 2.

### S. Malachi, Bishop.

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'OF all the miracles which S. Malachi worked, he himself,' says S. Bernard, 'was the greatest :' so complete was his victory over self, so active his charity for Christ's Mystical Body, whether in purgatory or militant on earth. During his childhood he would often separate himself from his companions to converse in prayer with God. At the age of twenty-five he was ordained priest, and set himself to revive, as far as he was able, the ecclesiastical discipline, which had fallen somewhat into decay. His devotion and zeal led to his being consecrated Bishop of Connor, and shortly afterwards made Archbishop of his native city Armagh. This see having by a long-standing abuse been held as an heirloom in one family, it required on the part of the Saint no little tact and firmness to allay the dissensions caused by his election. No sooner had he done so than he retired in all humility to his former see of Connor, not to rest, indeed, but to do more for God. He twice made a pilgrimage to Rome to consult Christ's Vicar, the first time returning as Papal Legate, amid the joy of his people, with the pall for Armagh ; but the second time bound for a happier home. He was taken ill at Clairvaux. He died, aged fifty-four, where he fain would have lived, in S. Bernard's monastery, November 2nd, 1148, a fitting birthday for eternity for one who in life had ever been so tender a lover of the Church suffering.



## Charity for the Holy Souls.

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Our Lord said to S. Gertrude, 'God accepts every soul you set free, as if you had redeemed him from captivity, and will reward you in a fitting time for the benefit you have conferred.'

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'Prayer for the dead is more acceptable to God than for the living ; for the departed soul is in greater need, being no longer able to help itself.'  
—*S. Thomas Aquinas.*

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One day, while S. Malachi was burying the dead, he was laughed at by his sister, but her words had no other effect than to give him pain. When she died he said many Masses for her. Some time afterwards, in a vision, he saw his sister, dressed in mourning, standing in a churchyard, and saying that she had not tasted food for thirty days. Remembering that it was just thirty days since he last offered the Adorable Sacrifice for her, he recommenced doing so, and was rewarded, after some time, by other visions, in the last of which he saw her within the church, clothed in white, near the altar, and surrounded by bright spirits.

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'And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection.'  
—2 Mach. xii. 43.

## November 3.

### **S. Winefride, Virgin, Martyr.**

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EARLY in the seventh century Winefride, a maiden of princely birth in the kingdom of Wales, moved by the counsels of S. Beuno, to whose care she had been committed as a child, vowed her virginity to God ; and having received the veil from his hands, retired with certain of her companions to a nunnery which her father had built for her not far from his own house. This step excited the rage of Caradoc, son of the king of that country, who had sought her in marriage : he assailed her with words of reproach and insult, and at last, in a paroxysm of fury, fell on her with drawn sword, and severed her head from her body. ' Then,' writes the old chronicler, ' where the virgin fell there sprung up a fountain of sweet water, which bears to this day her name ; the stones of its basin were stained red as blood, and a fragrant moss grew on the sides under the stream.' He tells also how the earth opened to swallow up the wicked prince, and how at the prayer of Beuno his victim returned to life, bearing on her neck the mark of her martyrdom—a ruddy seam which traced the passage of the murderous sword. Such is the record of the past. But the holiness of Winefride and her miraculous power, even in this unbelieving age, are beyond dispute ; for year by year persons afflicted with all manner of diseases and infirmities are made sound in the well of the virgin Saint.

## Trust in the Power of the Saints.

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‘The prayers of the Saints,’ says S. John Chrysostom, ‘have a power, and indeed the mightiest, to help our need ; but they are specially efficacious when we try ourselves by doing penance, and by striving for better things to obtain what they ask.’

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‘God, who created all things, is in all places, and is everywhere to be adored. Yet His infinite wisdom thinketh fit to work wonders by the intercession of His Saints, not in all places, but as it pleaseth Him.’—*S. Augustine.*

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Among the more recent miracles effected at S. Winefride’s spring at Holywell is that of a boy, eleven years of age, son of Mr. Lucas, of 29 Wellington-street, Wigan, who, about 1868, fell from a crane some twenty-seven feet high. His head was so severely injured that he became deaf and dumb, and his speech and hearing were pronounced by several doctors irretrievably lost. In September, 1875, he was brought by his father to Holywell, and after bathing twice in the well both his speech and hearing returned. This case was so notorious that the inn where the boy was staying with his parents was besieged by visitors anxious to see him.

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‘In his life he did great wonders, and in death he wrought miracles.’—*Ecclus. xlviii. 14, 15.*

November 4.

**S. Charles Borromeo.**

ABOUT fifty years after the Protestant heresy had broken out, the providence of God raised up a mere youth to renew the face of His Church. In 1560 Charles Borromeo, then twenty-two years of age, was created cardinal, and by the side of his uncle, Pius IV., administered the affairs of the Holy See. His first care was the direction of the Council of Trent. He urged forward its sessions, guided its deliberations by continual correspondence from Rome, and by his firmness carried it to its conclusion. Then he entered upon a still more arduous work—the execution of its decrees. As Archbishop of Milan, he enforced their observance, and thoroughly restored the discipline of his see. He founded schools for the poor, seminaries for the clerics, and by his community of Oblates trained his priests to perfection. His reform was violently opposed by the government of Spain, and by the relaxed priests and religious under his charge ; yet he never yielded nor failed in his task. Inflexible in maintaining discipline, to his flock he was a most tender father. He would sit by the road-side to teach a poor man the *Pater* and *Ave*, and would enter hovels, the stench of which drove his attendants from the door. During the great plague he refused to leave Milan, and was ever by the sick and dying, and sold even his bed for their support. So he lived, and so he died, a faithful image of the Good Shepherd, up to his last hour giving his life for his sheep.

## Daily Renewal.

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Daily resolutions to fulfil, at all cost, every duty demanded by God, is the lesson taught by S. Charles ; and a lesson we must learn if we would overcome our corrupt nature and reform our lives.

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‘Whoever would go forward in the service of God must begin his life each day anew, must keep himself as much as possible in the presence of God, and in all his actions must have but one end, the Divine honour.’—*S. Charles.*

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A monk of the Order of the ‘Umiliati,’ which S. Charles was vigorously reforming, determined to destroy him. One evening, when the Saint was kneeling with his household at night-prayers, the murderer slipped in disguised, and, as the choir were singing the words, ‘Let not your heart be troubled,’ fired at the Saint. S. Charles fell forward on his face, and the household sprang to their feet ; but the Saint, lifting himself up, bade them kneel down, and with perfect composure completed the prayer. He had felt the ball, and deeming himself mortally wounded had commended his soul to God. On examination, it was found that the ball had not even pierced his rochet, but had left a black mark on the flesh which continued till his death.

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‘For which cause we faint not : but though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.’—2 Cor. iv. 16.

## November 5. **S. Placid, Martyr.**

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**S. PLACID** was one of the first and most beloved disciples of **S. Benedict**, to whom he was related by blood. He was born in Rome, in the year 515, of a patrician family, and at seven years of age was taken by his father to the monastery of Subiaco. He was present with **S. Benedict** when the latter caused the miraculous appearance of a spring of water by his prayers ; he was still a child when **S. Maurus** walked upon the water to save him from drowning in the lake ; and at thirteen years of age he followed his saintly abbot to the new foundation at Monte Cassino, where he grew up in the practice of a wonderful austerity and innocence of life. He had scarcely completed his twenty-first year when he was selected to establish a monastery in Sicily upon some estates which had been given by his father to **S. Benedict**. So great had his reputation already become that his journey to Messina was a succession of miraculous cures of persons who had been attracted by his name. He spent four years in building his monastery, and the fifth had not elapsed before an inroad of barbarians burned everything to the ground, and put to a lingering death, not only **S. Placid** and thirty monks who had joined him, but also his two brothers, **Eutychius** and **Victorinus**, and his holy sister **Flavia**, who had come to visit him. The monastery was rebuilt, and still stands under his invocation.

## The Uses of Adversity.

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Adversity is the touchstone of the soul, because it discovers the character of the virtue which it possesses. One act of thanksgiving when matters go wrong with us is worth a thousand thanks when things are agreeable to our inclinations.

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‘He gains not Jesus Christ who suffers not for Him.’—*S. Joseph Calasancius*.

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Manucha, the pirate captain, when he had destroyed the monastery of S. Placid, ordered the monks to be brought before him every day, and subjected them to all kinds of torment. When he saw that the Saint was joyful in spite of his sufferings, and ceased not to praise God, he commanded many blows to be given him on the mouth with a stone; then, when he did not even so prevail, he caused his tongue to be cut out. But Placid only spoke the louder, giving thanks to the Lord for that which he suffered for His sake.

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‘Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.’—*Apoc. iii. 10.*

## November 6.

### S. Pambo, Hermit.

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PAMBO chose from his youth the austere life of a solitary in the desert. Full of the fear of God, he was never seen to smile or to lose his recollection ; he never spoke without prayer ; and when consulted upon any spiritual matter, he humbly replied that he did not know what to say, and then he took time to pray and to reflect. He sometimes waited three months before giving an answer, until God taught him what he should say. The brethren in consequence received his words as if they came from God. When a solitary asked if it was not good to praise others, he answered : ' It is still better to be silent.' For three years Pambo prayed that God would not glorify him upon earth ; but this prayer was not heard, for his face often appeared so majestic and brilliant as to dazzle those who looked upon it. S. Athanasius sent for him to testify in Alexandria to the divinity of Jesus Christ, and received him with great honour. With other solitaires Pambo was banished by the Arians to a pagan island, where they converted all the inhabitants. At his death he said he had always lived by his own labour, and had never said a word he had repented of, but yet he seemed not to have begun to serve God. He expired in peace about 387.



## Government of the Tongue.

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We may often think the austerities of the saints are beyond our strength ; let us, then, imitate the guard they kept over their tongue. This is within the reach of all.

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‘It is good to fast and to give alms of the work of thy hands, but this will not make thee a monk. If thou art careful never to offend against charity thou shalt save thy soul.’—*S. Pambo*.

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Pambo left the world so young he had not learnt to read. He asked a solitary to teach him some psalms by heart. His first lesson was the words, ‘I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.’ He was so struck by this that he said it was enough, and he would come back for another lesson when he knew it. He did not return, and six months afterwards the solitary met him and asked him why he did not come. He said he had not yet learnt his first lesson. In after life, he told a friend it had taken him nineteen years to master it.

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‘I was dumb and was humbled, and kept silence from good things.’—Ps. xxxviii. 3.

## November 7. S. Willibrord.

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**WILLIBRORD** was born in Northumberland A.D. 657, and when eight years old was intrusted by his pious father to S. Wilfrid at Ripon. There he grew up as another Samuel, wise and grave beyond his years. When he was twenty years old he went to Ireland, to study under S. Egbert; and twelve years later he felt drawn to convert the great pagan tribes who were hanging as a cloud over the north of Europe. He went to Rome for the blessing of the Pope, and with eleven companions reached Utrecht. The pagans would not accept the religion of their enemies the Franks; and S. Willibrord could only labour in the track of Pepin Heristal, converting the tribes whom Pepin subjugated. At Pepin's urgent request he again went to Rome, and was consecrated Archbishop of Utrecht. He was stately and comely in person, frank and joyous, wise in counsel, pleasant in speech, in every work of God strenuous and unwearied. Multitudes were converted, and the Saint built churches and appointed priests all over the land. God granted him the signs, as well as the success, of an apostle; he wrought many miracles, and had the gift of prophecy. He laboured unceasingly as bishop for more than fifty years, beloved alike of God and of man, and died full of days and good works.

## Missionary Zeal.

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True zeal has its root in the love of God. It can never be idle ; it must labour, toil, be doing great things. It glows as fire ; it is, like fire, insatiable. See if this spirit be in you.

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‘How can that man say he loves God or desires His love who leaves His image lying in the mud, and makes no effort to rescue it ?’—*S. Bonaventure.*

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S. Willibrord was once thrown on an island called the Holy Isle, where it was forbidden to kill any animal, or to speak while drawing water from the spring. He baptized some young Danes whom he had instructed during the voyage, and slew what animals he required for food. The pagan king in his fury killed one of the Saint’s companions, and threatened him with death for having insulted his god. The Saint replied calmly, ‘There is one only God, who made heaven and earth, who gives eternal life to those who worship Him with true faith ; wherefore I bid thee turn from thy false gods to Him. If thou refuse thou shalt perish, with the god thou servest.’ The king quailed, and said, ‘I see thou dost not heed my threats, and thy words are daring as thy deeds.’ He would not submit to the faith, but sent the Saint back to Pepin with an escort of honour.

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‘I have come to send fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?’—Luke xii. 49.

## November 8.

### S. Pelagia, Penitent.

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PELAGIA, a pagan actress of Antioch, was so beautiful that whenever she went out, all jewelled and perfumed, as was her wont, men ran from afar to catch sight of her. She chanced once to hear a sermon by S. Nonnus, and she sent him the same day a letter addressed 'To the holy disciple of Jesus Christ, from a sinner and disciple of the devil.' Nonnus received her in presence of other bishops, and prostrating herself before them, she watered the ground with her tears, refusing to rise till they baptized her. She said to Nonnus, 'If thou hearest not my prayer, I beg God thou mayest be no Saint, but a pagan and an infidel, and have to answer for all the sins I shall commit.' Seeing her earnestness, Nonnus baptized her, and gave her the Sacrament of Confirmation and Holy Communion. He then placed her in the house of a holy matron, where she endured much from evil memories and diabolical visions; but she dispelled them by the sign of the Cross and by unceasing prayer. She gave over to the poor all her vast treasures, and on the eighth night she left Antioch in disguise, and going to Jerusalem, shut herself up in a cavern on Mount Olivet under the name of Brother Pelagius. She died after four years of most austere penance, silence, and prayer. None knew her history save Bishop Nonnus; but the solitaries, finding her to be a woman, praised God for her courage, and buried her with great honour.

## Courage in Penance.

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In the combats we shall have to sustain we must arm ourselves with courage, which consists not only in embracing good things, but still more in overcoming all the obstacles we meet with.

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‘Meditate on eternal darkness and the deplorable state of those condemned to it, who weep unceasingly. Think that you also have deserved it, and, profiting by the time still given you to avoid it, embrace eagerly the works of penance to satisfy the justice of God for your sins.’—*S. Ammon.*

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S. Pelagia was not content with macerating her body ; she was equally courageous in mortifying her mind and her curiosity. To admit air and light she had but a very small opening in the door of her cell, which she only left once a week to draw water and gather a few herbs. She never was known to speak to the solitaries whom she met ; and when she was visited by James, deacon of Heliopolis, who said he had come from Bishop Nonnus, she merely replied, ‘Let him pray for me ; he is truly a Saint of God.’ And shutting her little grate, she immediately began to recite the Office of Tierce.

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‘For behold this self-same thing, that you were made sorrowful according to God, how great carefulness it worketh in you : yea defence, yea indignation, yea fear, yea desire, yea zeal, yea revenge.’—2 Cor. vii. 11.

November 9.

## **S. Theodore Tyro, Martyr.**

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S. THEODORE was born of a noble family in the East, and enrolled while still a youth in the imperial army. Early in 306 the emperor put forth an edict requiring all Christians to offer sacrifice, and Theodore had just joined the legion and marched with them into Pontus, when he had to choose between apostasy and death. He declared before his commander that he was ready to be cut in pieces, and offer up every limb to his Creator who had died for him. Wishing to conquer him by gentleness, the commander left him in peace for a while that he might think over his resolution ; but Theodore used his freedom to set on fire the great temple of Isis, and made no secret of this act. Still his judge entreated him to renounce his faith and save his life ; but Theodore made the sign of the cross, and answered: ' As long as I have breath I will confess the name of Christ.' After cruel torture, the judge bade him think of the shame to which Christ had brought him. ' This shame,' Theodore answered, ' I and all who invoke His name take with joy.' At night his cell was full of light, and heavenly voices joined with his in the praises of Christ. He was condemned to be burnt. As the flame rose, a Christian saw his soul rise like a flash of light to heaven.

## Courage in Confessing the Faith.

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We are enlisted in the same service as the holy martyrs ; we fight under the banners of the same victorious King ; and we, too, must have courage and constancy if we would be perfect soldiers of Jesus Christ. Let us take our part with them in confessing the faith of Christ and despising the world, that we may have our part with them in Christ's kingdom.

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'In all places let us carry with us the confession of our faith, and wear it as a king wears his crown upon his head. Our faith and the confession of it is an ornament more glorious to us than a king's crown to him.'—*S. John Chrysostom.*

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An officer questioned Theodore about the Son of God whom he served, and said he preferred the service of his own emperor. Theodore made answer : 'Would that you had light to know the Son of God. Then you would leave darkness, in which you lie, and fight for the King of kings.'

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'Whoever shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father.'—*Matt. x. 32.*

## November 10.

### **S. Andrew Avellino.**

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**AFTER** a holy youth, Lancelot Avellino was ordained priest at Naples, and became an advocate in the ecclesiastical courts. One day, while earnestly defending the cause of a priest, a friend of his, he uttered an untruth. That evening he lit upon the passage, 'The mouth that lieth kills the soul.' Forthwith he left the law, and devoted himself entirely to the duties of the priesthood. At the age of thirty-six, he entered the Theatine Order. He took the name of Andrew, to show his love for the Cross, and added two heroic vows : always to resist his own will, and daily to advance towards perfection. Terrible and continual sufferings tried this resolve. For fifty years he was afflicted with a most painful rupture, while the cincture, intended for his support, became in his hand an instrument of torture, which pierced his emaciated frame. He could not take one single step without danger and suffering, yet he would never use a carriage ; but promptly and on foot attended every sick call. Once when he was carrying the Viaticum, and a storm had extinguished the lamps, a heavenly light encircled him, guided his steps, and sheltered him from the rain. But as a rule, his sufferings were unrelieved by God or man. In his last illness he lay on the hard boards, praying for a good death, and assailed by demons tempting him to despair. At last, on November 10th, 1608, after a final conflict with the Evil One, he died in peace.



## Preparation for Death.

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S. Andrew, who suffered so terrible an agony, is the special patron against sudden death. Ask him to be with you in your last hour, and to bring Jesus and Mary to your aid.

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‘He who hourly awaits death, even if he die suddenly, will not fail to die well.’—*S. Alphonsus Liguori*.

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On the last day of his life S. Andrew rose, in spite of his sufferings, to say Mass. He was in his eighty-ninth year, and so weak that he could scarcely reach the altar; yet none liked to thwart the purpose of the holy old man. He began the ‘Judica,’ and fell forward in a fit of apoplexy. Laid on a straw mattress he foamed at the mouth, and his whole frame was convulsed in agony, while the fiend in visible form advanced to seize his soul. Then, as his brethren prayed and wept, the voice of Mary was heard, bidding the Saint’s guardian angel send the tempter back to hell. The fiend slunk back in despair. A calm and holy smile settled on the features of the dying Saint as, with a grateful salutation to the image of Mary, he breathed forth his soul to God.

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‘Before thy death work justice, for in hell there is no finding food.’—Ecclus. xiv. 17.

## November 11. S. Martin of Tours.

WHEN a mere boy, Martin became a Christian catechumen against his parents' wish ; and at fifteen was therefore seized by his father, a pagan soldier, and enrolled in the army. One winter's day, when stationed at Amiens, he met a beggar almost naked and frozen with cold. Having no money, he cut his cloak in two and gave him the half. That night he saw our Lord clothed in the half cloak, and heard Him say to the angels, ' Martin, yet a catechumen, hath wrapped Me in this garment.' This decided him to be baptized, and shortly after he left the army. He succeeded in converting his mother ; but being driven from his home by the Arians, he took shelter with S. Hilary, and founded near Poitiers the first monastery in France. In 372, he was made Bishop of Tours. His flock, though Christian in name, was still pagan in heart. Unarmed, and attended only by his monks, Martin destroyed the heathen temples and groves, and completed by his preaching and miracles the conversion of the people, whence he is known as the Apostle of Gaul. He next came into conflict with the Emperor Maximus, and though he strenuously defended the rights of the Church against that sovereign, he condemned himself severely for having once for the sake of peace yielded, as he thought, to an unworthy compromise. His last eleven years were spent in humble toil to atone for his fault, while God made manifest by miracles the purity of his soul.

## Toiling for Christ.

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The evil spirit once stood before Martin glittering in royal robes, and bade him adore him as the Son of God. 'My Saviour came not in princely state,' replied the Saint. 'Where are the print of the nails and the show of the wounds?' At these words the fiend vanished. It was for Christ crucified Martin worked. Are you working for the same Lord?

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'Lord, if I be yet necessary to Thy people, I decline not to labour; Thy will be done.'—*S. Martin on his deathbed.*

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The Saint was bowed down by his eighty years when he started off to a distant part of his diocese to settle a quarrel among his clergy. On his homeward journey his strength suddenly failed him, and he felt his end approaching. He caused himself to be laid in sackcloth and ashes with his face towards heaven, that his spirit might, as it were, be setting out on its journey. Then the enemy, watchful to the last, appeared at his side. 'Beast of blood,' said the Saint, 'why standest thou here? Deadly one, thou shalt find no part in me; Abraham's bosom is receiving me;' with these words he died.

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'For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.'—1 Cor. ii. 2.

## November 12.

### S. Martin, Pope.

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S. MARTIN, who occupied the Roman See from A.D. 649 to 655, incurred the enmity of the Byzantine court by his energetic opposition to the Monothelite heresy, which had obtained a strong hold in the East. The Exarch Olympius went so far as to endeavour to procure the assassination of the Pope as he stood at the altar in the church of S. Mary Major ; but the would-be murderer was miraculously struck blind, and his master refused to have any further hand in the matter. His successor had no such scruples ; he secured the person of Martin by a stratagem, and conveyed him on board a vessel bound for Constantinople. After a three months' voyage, the island of Naxos was reached, where the Pope was kept in confinement for a year, and finally, in 654, brought in chains to the imperial city. Stripped of his pontifical garments, he was dragged naked through the streets by an iron collar fastened to his neck, an executioner preceding him with drawn sword, to show that he was condemned to die. No words of complaint escaped his lips. ' I hope,' he said, ' that God, when He shall have taken me out of this world, will bring my persecutors to repentance.' His sentence was commuted to banishment to the Tauric Chersonese, where he lingered on for four months in sickness and starvation, till God released him by death on the 12th November, 655.

## Trust in the Holy See.

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There have been times in the history of Christianity when its truths have seemed on the verge of extinction. But there is one Church whose testimony has never failed : it is the Church of S. Peter, the Apostolic and Roman See. Put your whole trust in her teaching.

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‘This Church of Rome, founded by the Apostles Peter and Paul, retains the tradition it received from them ; and to her faith we point, thereby confounding all those who in any way form undue assemblies.’—*S. Irenæus*.

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The Emperor Constans issued during the Monothelite controversy an edict, known as the Type, in which, for the sake of peace, silence was imposed on both parties, and mention was forbidden of either one or two operations of will in Christ. To this document the approval of the Holy See was demanded, with the greater plausibility on this account—that the previous imperial manifesto, the Ecthesis of Heraclius, had distinctly asserted the heretical doctrine of the one Will. But S. Martin would hear of no compromise. ‘The Lord,’ he wrote, ‘has commanded us to shun evil and do good, but not to reject the good with the evil. We are not to deny at the same time both truth and error.’

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‘I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not : and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.’—Luke xxii. 32.

November 13.

**S. Didacus.**

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S. DIDACUS was born in Spain, in the middle of the fifteenth century. He was remarkable from childhood for his love of solitude, and when a youth retired and led a hermit life, occupying himself with weaving mats, like the fathers of the desert. Aiming at still higher perfection, he entered the Order of S. Francis. His want of learning and his humility would not allow him to aspire to the priesthood, and he remained a lay-brother till his death, perfect in his close observance of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and mortifying his will and his senses in every way that he could contrive. Through all his active employments and duties it is said of him that he never ceased from prayer during any part of the day. The high spiritual knowledge that he thus gained was such that learned doctors came from afar to consult him. His works of active charity were as remarkable, his loving care of the sick reaching to heroic heights. At one time he was sent by his superiors to the Canary Islands, whither he went joyfully, hoping to win the crown of martyrdom. Such, however, was not God's will, and after making many conversions by his example and holy words he was recalled to Spain. There, after a long and painful illness, he finished his days, embracing the cross which he had so dearly loved through his life. He died with the words of the hymn 'Dulce lignum' on his lips.

## Holy Conversation.

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If God be in your heart, He will be also on your lips, for Christ has said, 'From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.'

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'Thou hast a spiritual mouth sealed by the Holy Spirit. Ponder well the dignity of that mouth of thine. Thy dwelling-place is in heaven. Thy converse with the angels. Thou art deemed worthy of the kiss of the Lord. By so many and so great things has God adorned thy mouth—with the hymns of the angels, with more than angels' food, with His kiss, with His embrace—and darest thou speak ill?'—*S. John Chrysostom.*

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Although S. Didacus desired to live as a humble lay-brother, unknown and forgotten, his light could not be hidden, and men flocked to him to hear the words of wisdom which, as it were, could not help falling from his lips. It is said that when he was unable to give alms to a beggar craving charity, he spoke to him with such tenderness and unction that the poor man himself said that the brother's words were of more value than other men's gold. Wherever S. Didacus went, whether at home or among the heathen of the Canary Islands, his holy conversation drew souls irresistibly to God.

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'Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth : but that which is good to the edification of faith, that it may administer grace to the hearers.'—*Ephes. iv. 29.*

November 14.

## **S. Erconwald of London.**

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S. ERCONWALD, of royal but heathen parentage, was born at a time when the torrent of Divine grace, let loose by the preaching of S. Augustine, was spreading like a flood over our land. He and his sister were caught in its current, and, giving themselves up to its force, were led to forsake the pleasures of the court for the more satisfying joys of the cloister. From the monastery of Chertsey, which he had founded, and where he made great progress in the knowledge and love of God, he was called forth to be Bishop of London. After long years of arduous service, approved by many a miracle, it was revealed to him that his time of warfare was drawing to its close ; so, once more withdrawing himself from the cares of the world as he had formerly done from its pleasures, he sought the quiet convent of his sister at Barking, and there committed his soul into his Master's hands. Two miracles occurring shortly after his death testified how dear to God were the remains of this great Saint ; for as he died a heavenly perfume spread itself throughout the house, while a little later, as they carried him to his tomb in S. Paul's, the river Lea, swollen with recent rains, divided like the Jordan of old, and made a dry path for them that carried him to pass over. He died about 690. The citizens of London had a special devotion to S. Erconwald, and the illumination of his shrine was among the great sights of the metropolis.



## Reverence for Holy Relics.

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The woman in the Gospel was healed of her infirmity by devoutly touching the garment of our Divine Lord. Shall not we, then, touch with our humble faith and reverently kiss the sacred relics of the Saints, who stand round about the throne of God, the spiritual garments of the Most High, that we too may be made whole in soul and body?

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‘We believe that the bodies of the Saints, and especially the relics of the blessed martyrs, are to be honoured as the members of Christ, and that the churches named after them are to be frequented with the most reverent devotion. Whoever holdeth the contrary is no Christian, but a heretic.’—*S. Augustine.*

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In the year 1087, a terrible fire devastated the cathedral church of S. Paul’s, and all London was grieved at the thought of losing the precious relics of S. Erconwald. But God was careful for the honour of His servant ; for when the church was wholly in flames, and the molten lead ran in streams to the ground, the dry wooden tomb of S. Erconwald alone remained unhurt, with its velvet pall unsinged.

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‘And Eliseus took up the mantle of Elias, and he struck the waters, and they were divided hither and thither ; and Eliseus passed over.’—4 Kings ii. 13, 14.

## November 15. S. Gertrude, Abbess.

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GERTRUDE was born in the year 1263, of a noble Saxon family, and placed at the age of five for education in the Benedictine abbey of Rodelsdorf. Her strong mind was carefully cultivated, and she wrote Latin with unusual elegance and force ; above all she was perfect in humility and mortification, in obedience, and in all monastic observance. Her purity of intention flooded her soul with light, and gave her great largeness and liberty of spirit. It was said of her that in her mind was no error, on her heart no cloud ; none could resist her. Her life was crowded with wonders. The gift of miracles set its seal on the graces of this elect soul, and it seemed that Jesus could refuse nothing to her prayer. She has in obedience recorded some of her visions, in which she traces in words of indescribable beauty the intimate converse of her soul with Jesus and Mary. She was gentle to all, most gentle to sinners ; filled with devotion to the Saints of God, to the souls in purgatory, and above all to the Passion of our Lord and to His Sacred Heart. She ruled her abbey with perfect wisdom and love for forty years. Her life was one of great and almost continual suffering, and her longing to be with Jesus was not granted till A.D. 1334, when she had reached her seventy-second year. The prayers and exercises of S. Gertrude are still used by countless souls, which taste thereby the sweetness of the secret things of God.

## Death in the Lord.

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No preparation for death can be better than to offer and resign ourselves anew to the Divine Will—humbly, lovingly, with unbounded confidence in the infinite mercy and goodness of God.

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‘Death is to the just the haven of eternal rest.’  
—*Blosius*.

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As she lay on her deathbed, languishing with love rather than disease, Extreme Unction was administered, and Jesus was standing at her side, clothed with dazzling glory, whispering to her words of unutterable consolation: ‘Now is come the hour thou hast so longed for, the hour in which I shall present thee to My Eternal Father.’ Then the dying Saint saw the Blessed Mother of God surrounded with choirs of angels and Saints, and among them the sisters whom she had trained and guided. They sang hymns of paradise, ‘Come away; for the joys of heaven await thee!’ And when the last moment arrived, Jesus drew nearer still, opened to her His Sacred Heart, received into it her blessed soul, and bore it as a precious pearl to heaven.

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‘And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.’—Apoc. xiv. 13.

November 16.

## **S. Edmund of Canterbury.**

It was said of S. Edmund that 'in his mouth was never aught save peace, purity, and piety, and that in his heart was naught save Christ alone.' These graces were due to the training of his pious mother, Mabel Rich, who instilled into his young soul a marvellous love of purity and of the Blessed Mother of God. He left his home at Abingdon, a boy of twelve years old, to study at Oxford, and there protected himself against many grievous temptations by a vow of chastity, and by espousing himself to Mary for life. Wholly given to the contemplation of divine things, he was yet soon called to active public life, and as treasurer of the diocese of Salisbury showed such charity to the poor that the dean said he was rather the treasure than the treasurer of their church.

In 1234 he was raised to the see of Canterbury, where, notwithstanding his gentle and retiring disposition, he fearlessly defended the rights of Church and State against the avarice and greed of Henry III. Finding himself, after a fierce contest, unable to force that monarch to relinquish the livings which he kept vacant for the benefit of the royal coffers, Edmund retired into exile sooner than appear to connive at so foul a wrong. After two years spent in solitude and prayer, he went to his reward, and the miracles wrought at his tomb at Pontigny were so numerous that he was canonized in 1246, within four years of his death.

## Devotion to Mary Immaculate.

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The Saints were tempted even more than ourselves ; but they stood where we fall, because they trusted to Mary, and not to themselves.

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‘Following her, thou strayest not ; thinking of her, thou errest not ; asking of her, thou wilt never despair ; clinging to her, thou wilt never fall. If she be with thee thou hast all, and wilt thyself feel how true the words “and the name of the Virgin was Mary.”’—*S. Bernard.*

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S. Edmund wore night and day the ring with which, as a boy, he had espoused himself to Mary in her church at Oxford. During his studies her image stood ever on his table ; and when at the end of his long conflict he came to die, his love of Mary shone out more brightly than ever. Having received with great joy the last Sacraments, he asked that his crucifix, with the figure of the Mother of Sorrows, might be brought to him. He kissed them with inexpressible tenderness, and having himself laid on the floor, caused them to be so placed that his dying eyes might rest on Jesus and Mary till his soul went to God.

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‘I love them that love Me : and they that in the morning early watch for Me shall find Me.’—Prov. viii. 17.

## November 17.

### S. Hugh of Lincoln.

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S. HUGH, born in Burgundy, was placed at an early age under the care of some Canons Regular, with whom he remained till divine grace drew him to the Carthusians at Grenoble. Later on he was sent to England, to establish a monastery at Witham. He was much venerated by Henry II., who attributed his escape from shipwreck to the merits of S. Hugh. His love of the Holy Scriptures was remarkable; indeed of him it could be said, in his own words, they were his 'delight in peace, arms in war, food in time of famine, and medicine in infirmity.' Being promoted to the see of Lincoln, his courage soon manifested itself in resisting all encroachments on his spiritual authority. Indeed on one occasion, having withstood the injustice of King Richard, and excommunicated those sent to arrest him, he forced himself into the presence of the king, and by his firmness and withal sweetness of manner brought him to repentance, the king remarking that, 'if all bishops were like Hugh, no power could prevail against them.' The tender charity of this 'mallet of the king,' as he was called, was as conspicuous as his fortitude, finding vent in innumerable acts of mercy, which won him the hearts of all. About to die, he begged to be stretched upon a cross of ashes strewn on the floor, and in this loving act of humility breathed his last, at the age of sixty, A.D. 1200, having been bishop fifteen years. In life and death many miracles attested his sanctity.

## Moral Courage.

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It is the presence of God in His Catholic Church which at all times has sustained and made invincible the constancy of holy prelates when called upon to resist the tyranny of civil powers. If God be with us, who can be against us?

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‘Behold our King marcheth before us, who will fight for us. Let us follow Him manfully; let no one fear terrors; let us go forward together. Jesus will be with us.’—*Imitation*.

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S. Hugh was one day, like another Tobias, engaged in burying the dead, when the king sent a messenger to invite him to dinner; but the holy bishop continuing his pious work, another was sent by the impatient monarch to say that he was waiting for him. On this, the bishop remarked: ‘Why doth he expect me? For better it were an earthly king should eat without me than that the commandment of the King of Heaven should be contemned; my food is to fulfil the will of the Eternal Father.’

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‘Behold I command thee; take courage, and be strong. Fear not, and be not dismayed, because the Lord thy God is with thee in all things.’—*Josue i. 9.*

November 18.

## **S. Gregory Thaumaturgus.**

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S. GREGORY was born in Pontus, of heathen parents. In Palestine, about the year 231, he studied philosophy under the great Origen, who led him from the pursuit of human wisdom to Christ, who is the Wisdom of God. Not long after, he was made Bishop of Neocæsarea in his own country. His humility filled him with fear, and he retired from the world in order to learn more accurately the mysteries of the faith. As he lay awake one night, an old man entered his room, and pointed to a lady of superhuman beauty and radiant with heavenly light. This old man was S. John the Evangelist; and when the lady told him to give Gregory the instruction he desired, S. John said that in this also he was ready to please the Mother of the Lord. Thereupon he gave S. Gregory a creed which contained in all its fulness the doctrine of the Trinity. S. Gregory set it in writing, directed all his preaching by it, and handed it down to his successors. Strong in this faith, he subdued demons, he foretold the future. At his word a rock moved from its place, a river changed its course, a lake was dried up. He converted his diocese, and strengthened those under persecution. He struck down a rising heresy; and when he was gone this creed preserved his flock from the Arian pest. S. Gregory died in the year 270.



## Devotion to our B. Lady.

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Devotion to the Blessed Mother of God is the sure protection of faith in her Divine Son. Every time that we invoke her, we renew our faith in the Incarnate God ; we reverse the sin and unbelief of our first parents ; we take our part with her who was blessed because she believed.

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‘The chain of Eve’s disobedience was broken by the obedience of Mary. That which Eve bound by her unbelief, Mary set free by her faith. Mary became the advocate of Eve. The cunning of the serpent was worsted by the simplicity of the dove.’—*S. Irenæus.*

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When S. Gregory went to his diocese there were but seventeen Christians in it ; when he died, but seventeen heathen. He built a church for his people, the first Christian church of which we have any certain record. It survived the persecution of Diocletian, who ordered that all the Christian churches should be razed to the ground. It stood unshaken in an earthquake which destroyed the city. It was the symbol of that unshaken faith which Gregory received from the Virgin Mother of God.

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‘I took root in an honourable people, and My abode is in the full assembly of the Saints.’—*Ecclus. xxiv. 16.*

## November 19. **S. Elizabeth of Hungary.**

**ELIZABETH** was daughter of a king of Hungary, and niece of S. Hedwige. She was betrothed in infancy to Louis, Landgrave of Thuringia, and brought up in his father's court. In her fourth year she began to spend her time in prayer, and gave all she had to the poor; and growing up she increased in piety and humility, undeterred by the reproaches and ridicule of her husband's family and courtiers. She never left her husband without necessity, and in his absence laid aside her royal robes and lived in retirement. She was the first in Germany to join the Third Order of S. Francis. Not content with receiving daily numbers of poor in her palace, and relieving all in distress, she built several hospitals, where she served the sick, dressing the most repulsive sores with her own hands. God rewarded her charity with many miracles. Once, on her way to a banquet, she gave her ducal mantle to a poor man, and an angel restored it to her. Another time, being simply dressed, she appeared before her father's ambassadors in a purple robe embroidered with gold and precious stones. On her husband's death she was cruelly driven from her palace, and forced to wander through the streets with her little children, a prey to hunger and cold; but she welcomed all her sufferings and continued to be the mother of the poor, converting many by her holy life. She died in 1231, at the age of twenty-four.

## Love of the Poor.

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~~This~~ young and delicate princess made herself the servant and nurse of the poor. Let her example teach us to disregard the opinions of the world and to overcome our natural repugnances, in order to serve Jesus Christ in the persons of His poor.

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‘A tender love of our neighbour is one of the greatest and most excellent gifts that the Divine Goodness bestows upon men.’—*S. Francis of Sales.*

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Once as S. Elizabeth was descending by a very steep and rough path from her castle to the town, carrying in the folds of her mantle bread, meat, eggs, and other provisions for the poor, she met her husband returning from the chase. Astonished to see her bending under the weight of her burden, he opened the mantle which she kept pressed against her, and found in it nothing but the most beautiful red and white roses he had ever seen, although it was not the season for flowers. He also saw over her head a luminous image, in the form of a crucifix. Bidding her pursue her way, he took one of the marvellous roses, and kept it all his life.

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‘Eat thy bread with the hungry and the needy, and with thy garments cover the naked.’—Tobias iv. 17.

November 20.

**S. Edmund, King, Martyr.**

IN 855, Offa, King of East Anglia, anxious to finish his days in holy seclusion, gave up his throne in favour of Edmund, then a youth of fifteen. The young king showed a precocious wisdom in governing, making himself personally acquainted with all the state affairs of his kingdom. Though so watchful a ruler, he was zealous in devout practices, and retired for a whole year into solitude, that he might learn the Psalter by heart. After he had reigned peacefully and prosperously for fifteen years the Danes invaded England, plundering and destroying wherever they went, and especially vowing destruction to everything Christian. When they approached the convent of Coldingham, S. Ebba, the abbess, and her nuns, fearless of all but their purity, horribly mutilated themselves by cutting off their noses and upper lips. When the barbarians broke in, horror-struck at the spectacle, they contented themselves with putting the holy women to the sword. Edmund resolved to do all he could to save his own country, raised whatever forces he could, and routed part of the invading host near Thetford; but fresh hordes pouring in, he saw that resistance was vain, and as all terms offered by the Danes were inconsistent with his duty to God and man, he disbanded his troops and tried to conceal himself. He was, however, captured and brutally put to death, displaying the most heroic Christian endurance to the end.

## Patience in Adversity.

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S. Edmund's example endures until now. In his prosperity he only lived to do God's will; therefore in adversity he still rejoiced when called on by that holy will to suffer. Learn from him to accept all your sufferings from the hands of God.

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'Thy life is our way; and by holy patience we walk on to Thee, who art our crown.'—*Imitation.*

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After S. Edmund was taken prisoner he was offered his life and liberty on conditions equally hurtful to his country and to religion. He, in reply, declared that religion was dearer to him than life, which was worthless when bought at such a price. Then Hingua the Dane, not content with putting the noble king to death, subjected him to the most terrible tortures, vainly hoping to shake his fortitude. He was beaten with cudgels, then torn with scourges, and at last bound to a tree and shot at with arrows, until, while still living, he was transpierced in every part. All this the Saint bore with joy and patience, calling on the holy name of Jesus. It was only after he had endured every possible torture that the Danes, weary of their cruelty, struck off his head.

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'This trial, therefore, the Lord permitted to happen to him, to give to posterity an example of his patience.'—Tobias ii. 12.

November 21.

## **S. Oswin, King, Martyr.**

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TWELVE centuries ago Oswin ascended the throne of the fair north-country province of Deira. In person he was handsome, tall, and winning. His rule was just, peaceful, and happy, and he loved and was beloved by all his subjects. He found a bosom friend in the venerable Bishop S. Aidan, and a mortal enemy in his jealous and covetous neighbour, King Oswy. Each in turn served Oswin with occasions of virtue. At one time we find him on his knees before S. Aidan, asking forgiveness for a hasty speech; at another disbanding his brave and loyal men, to save them from Oswy's superior force. Seeing at last that his own death could alone pacify Oswy and save his people, despite their tears and the willing offer of their lives, he chose a companion and bade them farewell. He was pursued, betrayed, and slain on the 2nd of August, 651. His memory was ever held in love and veneration. His remains were lost sight of in the troubles of the times, until the Saint, appearing in glory, revealed their resting-place in the abbey of Tynemouth. Many cures were wrought and graces obtained at his shrine. Robert de Mowbray, a follower of William the Conqueror, completed the church of Our Lady, into which the relics were with great pomp translated on the 20th August, 1103. Oswin has always been honoured as the patron Saint of Tynemouth.

## Acknowledgment of Faults.

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By readily acknowledging any fault, great or small, we confound the devil, humble our pride, and rise by our very falls.

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‘It is not enough that thou shouldst accuse thyself, but that thou shouldst accuse thyself first, nor wait for others to bring the charge against thee.’—*S. John Chrysostom.*

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S. Aidan used to travel about his diocese on foot, at the cost of much time, fatigue, and even danger. The king therefore gave him a valuable horse. Shortly afterwards the bishop, falling in with a beggar, gave the poor man the horse, rich trappings and all. This apparently uncalled-for generosity vexed the king, and he remonstrated with S. Aidan, who therefore replied, ‘What, O king? Is that foal of a mare dearer to you than a son of God?’ The king soon came to himself, fell on his knees, and sought forgiveness with so much humility, that the bishop, in turn overcome, said mournfully to a bystander, ‘I know well the king will not live, for never did I see a prince so humble. The nation is not worthy of him, and he will be taken from us.’

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‘The just is the first accuser of himself.’—*Prov. xviii. 17.*

November 22.

**S. Cecilia, Virgin, Martyr.**

ON the evening of her wedding-day, 'cantantibus organis,' as the Church sings in her antiphon, with the music of the marriage-hymn ringing in her ears, Cecilia, a rich, beautiful, and noble Roman maiden, renewed the vow by which she had consecrated her virginity to God. 'Pure be my heart and undefiled my flesh; for I have a Spouse you know not of—an angel of my Lord.' The heart of her young husband Valerian was moved by her words; he received baptism, and within a few days he and his brother Tiburtius, who had been brought by him to a knowledge of the faith, sealed their confession with their blood. Cecilia only remained. 'Do you not know,' was her answer to the threats of the prefect, 'that I am the bride of my Lord Jesus Christ?' The death appointed for her was suffocation, and she remained a day and a night in a hot-air bath, heated seven times its wont. But as with the Three Children, so it was with her; 'the flames had no power over her body, neither was a hair of her head singed.' The lictor sent to despatch her struck with trembling hand the three blows which the law allowed, and left her still alive. For two days and nights Cecilia lay with her head half severed on the pavement of her bath, fully sensible, and joyfully awaiting her crown; on the third the agony was over, and, A.D. 177, the virgin Saint gave back her pure spirit to Christ.



## Joy in Christ's Service.

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S. Cecilia teaches us to rejoice in every sacrifice as a pledge of our love of Christ, and to welcome sufferings and death as hastening our union with Him.

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‘He who has tasted Thy sweetness, O Lord, loathes every other joy.’—*S. Augustine.*

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During the triduo of S. Cecilia's passion the Christians came in crowds to collect relics of her sacred blood, to beg her prayers, and to receive her last breath. She spoke to each according to their needs, encouraging and consoling all. On the third morning Bishop Urban, the Pope's vicar, visited the dying martyr. ‘I have prayed,’ she said, ‘not to die till I could recommend to your care the poor, whom I have always nourished, and could make over to you this house, that it may be a church for ever.’ The bishop signified his assent and gave her his blessing. Then, turning her face towards the ground, and folding her hands like one in sleep, she passed to the presence of God. In 1599 the body of the Saint was found in the church of S. Cecilia in Trastevere perfectly incorrupt, and retaining, after a lapse of thirteen centuries, all its virginal grace and modesty.

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‘O, how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee!’—Ps. xxx. 20.

## November 23.

### **S. Clement of Rome.**

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S. CLEMENT is said to have been a convert of noble birth. The early Fathers identified him with the Clement whose name S. Paul declares to the Philippians was written in the Book of Life ; and Tertullian assures us that Clement was consecrated bishop by S. Peter himself. Be that as it may, it is certain that he had seen the Apostles and conversed with them. With their divine words still ringing in his ears, he began to rule the Church of God ; and thus he was among the first, as he was among the most illustrious, in the long line of those who have held the place and power of Peter. Clement entered on his high office in evil days. He lived at the same time and in the same city with Domitian, the persecutor of the Church ; and besides external foes he had to contend with schism and rebellion from within. The Corinthian Church was torn by intestine strife, and its members set the authority of their clergy at defiance. It was then that S. Clement interfered in the plenitude of his apostolic authority, and sent his famous epistle to the Corinthians. He urged the duties of charity, and above all of submission to the clergy. He did not speak in vain ; peace and order were restored. S. Clement had done his work on earth, and shortly after sealed with his own blood the faith which he had learned from Peter and taught to the nations.

## Submission to the Clergy.

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God rewards a simple spirit of submission to the clergy, for the honour done to them is done to Him. Your virtue is unreal, your faith in danger, if you fail in this.

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‘Those who abide in obedience to their clergy inherit honour and glory from God. He exalts them and writes them in the book of His memorial for ever and ever.’—*S. Clement*.

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Would you learn how to venerate the teaching of the Church and of the Pope? Then look to the first days of the Church and to the disciples of the Apostles. Although the Corinthians had sinned by schism and rebellion, they were appeased when once the Pope had spoken, and they received Clement’s letter almost as if it had been inspired. Not long after the middle of the second century, S. Dionysius tells us that in his time the epistle of Clement was still read publicly from time to time in the Corinthian Church, as they also read another letter recently received from one of S. Clement’s successors ; and long after we know that other Churches showed a like reverence to S. Clement and his epistle.

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‘Obey your prelates, and be subject to them.’  
—Heb. xiii. 17.

## November 24.

### S. John of the Cross.

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THE father of S. John was discarded by his kindred for marrying a poor orphan, and the Saint, thus born and nurtured in poverty, chose it also for his portion. As a child he slept on the floor, and rose early that he might serve at Mass before going to school, and people were moved to devotion by seeing his recollectedness before the altar. Unable to learn a trade, he became the servant of the poor in the hospital of Medina, while still pursuing his sacred studies. In 1563, being then twenty-one, he humbly offered himself as a lay-brother to the Carmelite friars, who, however, knowing his talents, had him ordained priest. He would now have exchanged to the severe Carthusian Order, had not S. Teresa, with the instinct of a Saint, persuaded him to remain and help her in the reform of his own Order. Thus he became the first prior of the Barefooted Carmelites. In his mystical works he describes the interior trials and consolations of a perfectly detached soul. His reform, though approved by the general, was rejected by the elder friars, who condemned the Saint as a fugitive and apostate, and cast him into prison, whence he only escaped, after nine months' suffering, at the risk of his life. Twice again, before his death, he was shamefully persecuted by his brethren, and publicly disgraced. But his complete abandonment by creatures only deepened his interior peace and devout longing for heaven.

## Perfect Detachment.

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‘Live in the world,’ said S. John, ‘as if God and your soul only were in it ; so shall your heart be never made captive by any earthly thing.’

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The Saint hearing the voice of Christ say, ‘John, what reward shall I give thee for all thy labours?’ replied, ‘Lord, to suffer and be despised for Thy sake.’

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When S. John was in his last illness, he was given the choice of one of two convents where he should repair for treatment. The one at Baëza was convenient in every way, and the prior was his intimate friend. The other, at Ubeda, was distant and poor ; and the prior, F. Diego, was his bitter enemy. He chose the latter. The fatigue of the journey increased the wounds in his leg, which caused him intense pain ; yet the prior locked him up for three months in a little cell, and forbade him all relief. Here he lingered, till released by the Provincial a few days before his death, when the prior was himself converted by his invincible patience. Then the Saint prepared with joy to die, and crucifix in hand, with the words, ‘Glory be to God !’ he breathed forth his soul, A.D. 1591, being then forty-nine years old. S. Teresa says, ‘He was one of the purest souls in the Church of God.’

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‘I know thy tribulation and thy poverty ; but thou art rich.’—Apoc. ii. 9.

November 25.

## **S. Leonard of Port Maurice.**

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S. LEONARD was born at Port Maurice, A.D. 1676. He had an uncle at Rome, who, hearing of his nephew's promise, sent for him, and educated him in the Holy City. There Leonard became a brother of the Little Oratory, and used to speak, when an old man, of the blessings he had derived from S. Philip's Institute. While he was engaged in study and works of mercy, God called him into religion; and after great deliberation, he entered the Franciscan Order. For five years his health failed him, but he was restored by the special intervention of our Lady; and he vowed to her in gratitude to give himself to the conversion of sinners. His first act on leaving his room was to perform the Way of the Cross; and thenceforward he went throughout Italy preaching penance. 'Either penance or hell.' He gave 316 missions; and in 216 different places he established the perpetual adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament. He lived always on alms, and went from town to town barefoot. He used to scourge himself in the pulpit, and often fainted from exhaustion. 'I wish not for rest on earth, he would say, 'but in paradise.' When urged to omit the Holy Sacrifice, he answered, 'One Mass is worth all the treasures of the world.' Between the missions he used to give 'missions to himself.' He died in 1751, on his way to preach in Rome, at the age of seventy-five.

## The Way of the Cross.

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‘O, if Jesus crucified,’ says the *Imitation*, ‘were to come into our hearts, how quickly and sufficiently learned we should be!’

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‘If thou wouldst advance from virtue to virtue, from grace to grace, and from good to better, meditate daily, and with all the devotion thou art able, on the Passion of our Lord. For nothing will so thoroughly sanctify thy soul as meditating on the sufferings of Christ.’—*S. Bonaventure.*

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In the last year of his life, S. Leonard thought nothing would so much lead men to persevere, after the Jubilee of 1750 in Rome, as the regular practice of the Way of the Cross. Accordingly he erected the Stations in the Coliseum, and with the approval of the Sovereign Pontiff, the Confraternity of the Lovers of Jesus and Mary undertook to visit them in procession, and to bring as many as possible to join in this holy exercise. This was the Saint’s last work for Rome, and it endured till the present evil days. How often do we, who have still the power, make the Way of the Cross?

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‘Think diligently upon Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself, that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds.’—Heb. xii. 3.

November 26.

## **S. Stanislas Kostka.**

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S. STANISLAS was of a noble Polish family. As a child he showed such purity of soul, it was said he was an angel now, and would be a Saint by and by. When at his father's table any evil talk took place, the boy would turn pale, and if the subject was pursued he would swoon away. At the age of fourteen he went with his elder brother Paul to the Jesuits' College at Vienna; and though Stanislas was ever bright and sweet-tempered, his austerities were felt as a reproach by Paul, who shamefully maltreated him. This ill-usage and his own penances brought on a dangerous illness, and being in a Lutheran house he was unable to send for a priest. He now remembered to have read of his patroness, S. Barbara, that she never permitted her clients to die without Holy Viaticum: he devoutly appealed to her aid, and she appeared with two angels, who gave him the Sacred Host. He was cured of this illness by our Lady herself, and was bidden by her to enter the Society of Jesus. To avoid his father's opposition he was obliged to fly from Vienna; and having proved his constancy by cheerfully performing the most menial offices, he was admitted to the novitiate at Rome. There, after a probation of ten short months, marked by a rare piety, obedience, and devotion to his institute, he died, as he had prayed to die, on the feast of the Assumption, 1568, at the age of seventeen.



## Devotion to the Patron Saints.

S. Stanislas teaches us in every trial of life, and above all in the hour of death, to have recourse to our patron Saint, and to trust without fear to his aid.

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‘He was seen on earth to be our example. He was raised to heaven to be our patron.’—*S. Bernard.*

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S. Stanislas had drawn as his monthly patron for August the glorious martyr S. Laurence, and in his honour he performed daily some penance or devotion. On the eve of his feast he obtained leave to take the discipline; in the morning he went to Communion, and then laid before the image of the Saint a letter addressed to our Lady, in which he begged that he might die on her feast of the Assumption, and he prayed S. Laurence to present to her his petition. That night he was seized with a slight fever, which, however, rapidly increased; and on Assumption-eve he received the last Sacraments. Then, as he lay dying, he had brought to him a little book containing a Litany in his own writing of his monthly patron Saints, whom he constantly invoked. At 3 A.M. on the feast of the Assumption his face suddenly lit up with joy, and he breathed forth his soul to the Mother of God, who had come to conduct him to heaven.

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‘The eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and His ears unto their prayers.’—Ps. xxxiii. 16.

November 27.

**SS. Tarachus and Companions,  
Martyrs.**

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S. TARACHUS and his companions were apprehended in Cilicia about the year 304, and died at Anazarbus, one of the chief cities in that country. Differing as they did in age and in condition, they were all alike in the constancy of their faith, and proof against the utmost ingenuity of torture. They were scourged and racked, their jaws were broken, and their teeth knocked out with stones. Their hands were thrust into the burning coals, and in this extremity of torment they found refreshment for their souls. The tongue of the young Andronicus was cut out and burnt, lest, as the governor Maximus said, 'foolish women' should honour it as a relic. At last they were all carried helpless to the amphitheatre, and the wild beasts let loose upon them.

But God showed that men have no power of their own over the souls and bodies of His Saints. Maximus was obliged to despatch them with the sword, for the wild beasts licked the sores and crouched at the feet of the martyrs. Their dead bodies were thrown among those of the gladiators, and a watch set over them. But at night storm and earthquake scattered the guards: a miraculous light like a star guided the Christians in their search, stood over each of the sacred bodies in succession, and then went before the faithful band till the relics were placed in safety.

## Devotion to Relics.

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The Church encourages by every means devotion to holy relics, and this devotion should teach us a double lesson—confidence in the intercession of the Saints, and reverence for our own bodies, which are the temples of the Holy Ghost.

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‘Even when the soul is away power and virtue remain in the bodies of the Saints, because of the just souls which dwelt in them.’—*S. Cyril of Jerusalem.*

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In the fourth century, when the heathen persecution had passed away, a worse evil threatened the Church; for the blasphemy of Arius spread like a plague, and the faith of many was subverted. Then once again God was pleased to show the glory of His martyrs and their dread sanctity. Auxentius, the Arian Bishop of Mopsuestia, dedicated a church to S. Tarachus and his companions, and it is said that he opened the marble shrine in which their bodies rested, wishing to obtain some of their relics for his new church. The prodigies which followed were so terrible, that he had to close the shrine again and leave the holy relics as they were.

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‘The Lord keepeth all their bones : not one of them shall be broken.’—Ps. xxxiii. 21.

## November 28.

### **S. Hedwige, Widow.**

S. HEDWIGE, the wife of Henry, Duke of Silesia, and the mother of his six children, led a humble, austere, and most holy life amidst all the pomp of royal state. From her girlhood she wore no jewels nor rich dresses; and when she married, her palace was ruled with the exactness of a cloister. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was the key-note of her life. Her valued privilege was to supply the bread and wine for the Sacred Mysteries, and she would attend each morning as many Masses as were celebrated. Summer and winter she walked barefooted to the church, leaving the ground stained with her wounds, and then, kneeling without support or prostrate on the pavement, spent whole hours in prayer. In obedience to her confessor she once wore shoes for a year; at the end of that time she showed them to him as fresh and unsoiled as when she had received them. And he, convinced by this miracle of her holiness, permitted her to resume her penance. In honour of Christ and His Apostles, she kept always by her thirteen poor persons suffering from incurable diseases. For the last thirty years of her married life she and her husband lived in holy chastity, and after his death she retired to the Cistercian convent of Trebnitz. There she lived under obedience to her daughter Gertrude, growing day by day in holiness, till God called her to Himself, A.D. 1242.

## Hearing Mass.

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For the honour of God and for their own good, S. Philip used to exhort his penitents to hear Mass daily with devotion : this was the means to keep fervour and fidelity throughout the day, and to prepare for death.

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Our Lord said to S. Mechtildis : ' Receive it as a most certain truth, that if any one hears Mass with devotion, I will send him at the hour of his death, as a consolation and defence, as many glorious spirits who stand round My throne as he shall have heard Masses with fervency and love.'

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S. Hedwige's devotion to the Holy Mass communicated itself to her children. When her eldest and best loved son, Duke Henry, surnamed ' the Pious,' advanced against a horde of Tartars, who were devastating Silesia, his first action on the morning of the battle was to have Mass celebrated, at which he and every man in his army received Holy Communion. After exhibiting the most signal valour, Henry was slain ; and when S. Hedwige heard the news, she thanked God for having by such a death admitted him to His kingdom of glory.

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' What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath done to me ? I will take the chalice of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord.'—Ps. cxv. 12, 13.

November 29.  
**S. Saturninus, Martyr.**

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SATURNINUS went from Rome, by direction of Pope Fabian, about the year 245, to preach the faith in Gaul, where S. Trophimus, the first Bishop of Arles, had already gathered a plentiful harvest. He fixed his episcopal see at Toulouse, and thus became the first Christian bishop of that city. There were but few Christians in the place. However, their number grew fast after the coming of the Saint ; and his power was felt by the spirits of evil, who received the worship of the heathen. The oracles sought at their shrine were no longer given. The false priests confessed that Saturninus had put them under a spell ; and his power was felt the more because he had to pass daily through the Capitol, the high place of the heathen worship, on the way to his own church.

One day a great multitude was gathered by an altar, where a bull stood ready for the sacrifice. A man in the crowd pointed out Saturninus, who was passing by, accompanied by a priest and two deacons. The people fell upon him, and would have forced him to idolatry ; but the holy bishop answered : ' I know but one God, and to Him I will offer the sacrifice of praise. How can I fear gods who, as you say, are afraid of me ? ' On this he was fastened to the bull, which was driven down the Capitol. The brains of the Saint were scattered on the steps. His mangled body was taken up and buried by two devout women.

## Trust in the Power of the Saints.

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When beset by the temptations of the devil, let us call upon the Saints, who reign with Christ. They are stronger than the demons who fight against us. They were powerful during their lives against the devil and his angels. They are more powerful now that they have passed from the Church on earth to the Church triumphant.

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‘He who was powerful on earth is more powerful in heaven, where he stands before the face of his Lord.’—*S. Bernard.*

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The acts of his martyrdom witness to the confidence of the Christians in the intercession of Saturninus. For some time, they tell us, his body lay honoured by God alone. The next bishop, fearing to move the holy relics, built a humble chapel over his grave, and a multitude of Christians were buried hard by, desiring to rest by his holy body. In better times the Bishop Exuperius completed a costly church for the reception of the relics ; but he felt unworthy to attempt the translation till encouraged to do so by a vision. ‘And they,’ so the acts conclude, ‘who ask his intercession will feel the power of his patronage.’

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‘To me, Thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honourable: their principality is exceedingly strengthened.’—Ps. cxxxviii. 17.

## November 30.

### S. Andrew, Apostle.

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S. ANDREW is named by the Greeks the Protoclete, as it was his privilege to be the 'first-called' of the Apostles. He was one of the fishermen of Bethsaida, and brother, perhaps elder brother, of S. Peter, and became a disciple of S. John Baptist. He stands quite in the background of the Gospel narrative, yet the few traits recorded of him suggest a valuable lesson. He seems always eager to bring others into notice; when called himself by Christ on the banks of the Jordan, his first thought was to go in search of his brother, and he said, 'We have found the Messiah,' and he brought him to Jesus. When some Greeks at Jerusalem desired to see Jesus it was Andrew who, with Philip, spoke for them and introduced them to our Lord. It was he again who, when Christ wished to feed the five thousand in the desert, pointed out the little lad with the five loaves and fishes. Hence Venerable Bede calls him the 'introducer to Christ,' and we learn that an essential quality for an apostle is to be forgetful of self and thoughtful for others.

With these dispositions S. Andrew went forth upon his mission to plant the faith in Scythia and Greece, and at the end of years of toil to win a martyr's crown. After suffering a cruel scourging at Patræ in Achaia he was left, bound by cords, to die upon a cross.



## Self-Sacrifice.

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The faithful disciple left all things, his boat and his nets, to become a fisher of men, and embraced the cross to follow Christ. If we would do good to others we must, like S. Andrew, keep close to the Cross.

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'Give me,' S. Philip used to say, 'ten men truly detached, and with them I will convert the world.'

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When S. Andrew first caught sight of the gibbet on which he was to die, he greeted the precious wood with joy. 'O good cross,' he cried, 'made beautiful by the limbs of Christ, so long desired, now so happily found! Receive me into thy arms, and present me to my Master, that He who redeemed me through thee may now accept me from thee.' Two whole days the martyr remained hanging on this cross alive, preaching with outstretched arms from this chair of truth to all who came near, and entreating them not to hinder his passion.

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'Whosoever doth not carry his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.'—Luke xiv. 27.

December 1.

**S. Eligius.**

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**ELIGIUS**, a goldsmith at Paris, was commissioned by King Clotaire to make a throne. With the gold and precious stones given him he made two. Struck by his rare honesty, the king gave him an appointment at court, and demanded an oath of fidelity sworn upon holy relics ; but Eligius prayed with tears to be excused, for fear of failing in reverence to the relics of the Saints. On entering the court, he fortified himself against its seductions by many austerities and continual ejaculatory prayers. As he prayed to know if his penance was accepted, an odoriferous balsam descended upon his head from a case of relics under which he knelt, and he heard the words, 'Eligius, behold the sign ; thy prayer is heard.' He had a marvellous zeal for the redemption of captives, and for their deliverance would sell his jewels, his food, his clothes, and his very shoes, once by his prayers breaking their chains and opening their prisons. The poor besieged his door, they surrounded him in the street, and sat at his table, and he never refused them. His great delight was in making rich shrines for relics, and for this he always found time. His striking virtue caused him, a layman and a goldsmith, to be made Bishop of Noyon ; and his sanctity in this holy office was remarkable. He possessed the gifts of miracles and prophecy, and died in 665.

## Devotion to Relics.

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When God called His Saints to Himself, He might, had He so pleased, have taken their bodies also ; but He willed to leave them in our charge, for our help and consolation. Be careful to imitate S. Eligius in making a good use of so great a treasure.

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‘We honour the relics of the martyrs, that we may adore Him, whose martyrs they are. We honour the servants, that the honour of the servants may redound to the Lord, who says, “He that receiveth you, receiveth Me.”’—*S. Jerome.*

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When S. Eligius had sought unsuccessfully for the body of S. Quentin, he spent three days in prayer and fasting, and vowed to renounce his bishopric and to finish his life amongst the beasts if God found him unworthy to discover the relics of the holy martyr. Excavating again, he was led to the body by its delicious fragrance, and the light it gave forth, which illuminated all the place, although it was night-time. Eligius made a rich shrine for it with his own hands, and built a large church over the spot, where now stands the town of S. Quentin.

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‘And his bones were visited, and after death they prophesied.’—*Ecclus. xlix. 18.*

**December 2.**

**S. Theodoret, Martyr.**

ABOUT the year 361 Julian, uncle to the emperor of that name, and like his nephew an apostate, was made Count of the East. He closed the Christian churches at Antioch, and when S. Theodoret assembled the Christians in private, he was summoned before the tribunal of the count. The only charge against him was his zeal for the house of God; and when he refused to offer the heathen sacrifices, he was bastinadoed, struck in the face, and tortured again and again, till the blood streamed from his sides. But for himself he feared neither death nor torments, and it was the persecutors who had cause to fear. 'O most wretched man,' he said to his judge, 'you know well that at the day of judgment the crucified God whom you blaspheme will send you and the tyrant whom you serve to hell.' And God did indeed strike the ministers of iniquity with fear. The executioners who came to burn the side of the martyr with lighted torches saw four angels standing by him clothed in white; they refused to do their office, confessed the faith, and were cast into the sea rather than renounce it. Julian himself, though he hardened his heart, trembled when Theodoret prophesied the awful death which was soon to overtake him, and was glad to rid himself of the Saint's presence. He had him despatched quickly by the sword, and in a little the judge himself was arraigned before the judgment-seat of God.

## Fear of God's Judgments.

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S. Philip tells us that those who do not go down to hell in spirit are very likely to go there in reality. Take care to meditate upon the four last things, and to live in holy fear. You will learn to love God better by thinking how He punishes those who do not love Him.

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‘Fear of God is the basis of salvation : if we fear, we shall beware ; if we beware, we shall save our souls.’—*Tertullian*.

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‘You, O Julian,’ said Theodoret, ‘will die in torments on your bed. Your master is setting out in hope of victory against the Persians. He will never return : he will be slain in a strange land, and no one will be able to tell who struck the blow.’ This prophecy met with a terrible fulfilment. Shortly after, Count Julian went from an idolatrous sacrifice to his own house, and died eaten by worms, with circumstances too horrible to relate. The emperor was struck down by a stray arrow in the Persian war, and died, as the acts of S. Theodoret tell us, confessing that Christ had conquered, and yet blaspheming Him to the last.

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‘Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself ; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread, and He shall be a sanctification to you.’—Isai. iii. 13, 14.

## December 3.

### **S. Francis Xavier.**

A YOUNG Spanish gentleman, in the dangerous days of the Reformation, was making a name for himself as a professor of philosophy in the University of Paris. He had seemingly no higher aim, when S. Ignatius of Loyola won him to heavenly thoughts. Then, and for ever after, Francis gave himself unreservedly to gain souls to God. After a brief apostolate amongst his countrymen in Rome, he was sent by S. Ignatius to the Indies, where for twelve years, like another S. Paul, he was to wear himself out, bearing the Gospel to Hindostan, to Malacca, and to Japan. Though vested with the dignity of Nuncio Apostolic and Superior over his religious brethren, he only used his authority to take for himself the largest share of the toils and dangers of the work. Thwarted by the jealousy, covetousness, and carelessness of those who should have helped and encouraged him, neither their opposition nor the difficulties of every sort which he encountered could make him slacken his labours for souls. He was ever preaching, baptizing, hearing confessions, discussing with the learned, instructing the ignorant ; and yet all this was done with the greatest pains, as the elaborate instructions and the long letters which he has left behind prove. The vast kingdom of China appealed to his charity, and he was resolved to risk his life to force an entry, when God took him to Himself, and he died, like Moses, in sight of the land of promise.

## Thirst for Souls.

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Some are specially called to work for souls ; but there is no one who cannot help much in their salvation. Holy example, earnest intercession, the offerings of our actions in their behalf,—all this needs only the spirit which animated S. Francis Xavier, the desire to make some return to God.

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‘If God bids us rather lose our own life than give up the salvation of souls, we are determined to obey His command, with His own good assistance, and supplied by Him with strength and courage.’—*S. Francis Xavier*.

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A Portuguese gentleman once sailed in the same ship with S. Francis Xavier, and was very anxious to see the famous missionary. Great was his disappointment on being shown a person standing in a group round a chess-table, chatting familiarly with the soldiers, crew, and passengers, like any ordinary priest. At the end of the voyage, however, he sent his servant to see what became of him. Francis went aside into a wood and began to pray, and the servant soon ran to call his master to see the Saint in an ecstasy lifted from the ground in his prayers.

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‘Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with heavenly glory.’—*2 Tim. ii. 10.*

## December 4.

### S. Peter Chrysologus.

PETER was born at Imola near Ravenna. He was brought up as a monk by Cornelius, his spiritual father, who afterwards, when Bishop of Imola, ordained him deacon. On the death of John, the Archbishop of Ravenna, the clergy and people elected a successor, and sent deputies to Rome to gain the Pope's confirmation of their choice. But the Pope, warned by a heavenly vision, cancelled their election, and appointed Peter instead. The life of the new archbishop was henceforth that of a zealous pastor, preaching earnestly on fasting, almsgiving, and the frequentation of the Sacraments, and practising what he taught. A single incident in a hard-working but uneventful life illustrates his simple faith. The heresiarch Eutyches had written circular letters to the Western bishops in appeal against his condemnation. 'We exhort you,' wrote the Saint in reply, 'to submit obediently to all that is written by the most blessed Pope. S. Peter, who lives and presides in his own see, gives to all who seek it the true faith.' Peter is chiefly famous for his sermons—short, pithy, and full of solid instruction. These won for him the title of Chrysologus (of golden speech), not because he pleased the ear with mere eloquence, but because his words were good, true, and of priceless worth. He preached often, sometimes thrice in a day; but his sermons were never long. He reaped the reward of his apostolate about the year 450.



## Listening to Sermons.

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Listening devoutly to sermons is a great grace from God. To gain this grace begin with praying for the preacher. If a man gets no good from sermons, the fault is always his own.

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‘I,’ said S. Augustine, in one of his sermons, ‘am but the basket of the Sower, that is, of Christ; He has deigned to place the seed in me which I scatter to you. Look not to the vileness of the basket, but to the dignity of the Sower.’

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S. Peter once broke off in the middle of a sermon as if struck dumb. The people, seeing something amiss, began to weep and pray for him. In a subsequent sermon the holy preacher, when discoursing on the dumbness of Zachary, took occasion to draw a lesson from what had befallen himself. ‘Sermons,’ he said, ‘unlike all other speeches, are the word of God. They are not under the command of man, but of God. God bestows facility of speech and fruitfulness to sermons according to the needs or the merits of the hearers. A good sermon, therefore, often depends on the congregation as much as the preacher. If he speaks, let them listen well; if he is silent, let them be patient and pray for him. Speech would come to the preacher through their prayers, as the use of his tongue came to Zachary through his son.’

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‘The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.’—John xii. 48.

December 5.

**S. Barbara, Virgin, Martyr.**

THIS famous Saint is better known by the miraculous protection she has at all times shown to her devout clients than by the story of her life, which is obscured by various legends. The exact date of her death, whether in the third or fourth century, is disputed; but the main facts and peculiar features of her martyrdom have a lesson for us which is often needed. They illustrate our Lord's sayings, that He came not to send peace on earth, but a sword; to set a man at variance with his father, and that a man's enemies should be they of his own household. Barbara was brought up a heathen. A tyrannical father, Dioscorus, had kept her jealously secluded in a lonely tower which he had built for the purpose. Here, in her forced solitude, she gave herself to prayer and study in search of Divine truth. God rewarded her with the gift of faith. She then contrived to receive instruction and baptism by stealth from a Christian priest. Dioscorus, on discovering his daughter's conversion, was beside himself with rage. He himself denounced her before the civil tribunal. Several times was Barbara horribly tortured, and as often did God miraculously heal her wounds. At last she was beheaded, her own father, merciless to the last, acting as her executioner. God, however, speedily punished her persecutors. While her soul was being borne by angels to paradise, a flash of lightning struck Dioscorus, and he was hurried before the judgment-seat of God.

## Desire of Holy Viaticum.

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Pray often against a sudden and unprovided death ; and above all, that you may be fortified by the Holy Viaticum against the dangers of your last hour.

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‘ No one can be fit for martyrdom unless the Church has armed him for the conflict with the Body and Blood of Christ ; and that soul faints which the reception of the Eucharist has not made strong and inflamed.’—*S. Cyprian*.

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S. Barbara may be said to be the patroness of a good death, by obtaining for her clients the blessing of the Sacraments at that last hour. On this account, although a woman, she is often represented in art with a chalice and the Sacred Host in her hand. S. Stanislas Kostka was communicated by angels through invoking her name ; and Surius tells a story of a young man in Holland who, in 1448, awoke suddenly at night to find himself enveloped in flames. In an agony of mind and body, he called upon S. Barbara ; she appeared in answer to his prayer, threw her mantle round the scorched youth, and kept life and strength within him till he had received the Viaticum and last anointing, when he tranquilly expired.

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‘ Enlighten my eyes that I never sleep in death, lest at any time my enemy say : I have prevailed against him.’—Ps. xii. 4, 5.

## December 6.

### S. Nicholas of Bari.

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S. NICHOLAS, one of the greatest wonder-workers of the early Church, and the patron Saint of Russia, was born towards the end of the third century. The singular innocence of his youth attracted the notice of his uncle, the Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, who ordained him priest, and appointed him abbot of a monastery. The desire to hide himself in some distant desert led him to sail for the Holy Land ; but God overruled his purpose, and, on his return to Myra, he found himself elected to the then vacant see. He guarded his flock with loving zeal, and was much persecuted by the Arian heretics. Throughout his life he retained the bright and guileless manners of his early years, and showed himself the special protector of the innocent and the wronged. He once saved three officers unjustly sentenced to death, who invoked him in prayer, by appearing before the emperor at Constantinople without leaving his own city of Myra. He died A. D. 342. During the Mahometan invasion in 1087 his relics were translated to Bari in Italy, and there, after fifteen centuries, 'the manna of S. Nicholas' still flows from his sacred bones, and heals all kinds of sick. In Catholic days the feast of the Saint, as the special patron of youth, was kept with great pomp in our own country by the boys of Sarum School and of Eton College.

## Love of Innocence.

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Those who would enter heaven must be as little children, whose greatest glory is their innocence. Now two things are ours to do : first, to preserve it in ourselves, or regain it by penance ; secondly, to love and shield it in others.

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‘ But thee I long for, O righteousness and innocence, beautiful and comely to all pure eyes, and of a satisfaction unsating.’—*S. Augustine.*

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Nicholas once heard that a person who had fallen into poverty intended to abandon his three daughters to a life of sin. Determined, if possible, to save their innocence, the Saint went out by night, and, taking with him a bag of gold, flung it into the window of the sleeping father and hurried off. He, on awaking, deemed the gift a godsend, and with it dowered his eldest child. The Saint, overjoyed at his success, made like venture for the second daughter ; but the third time, as he stole away, the father, who was watching, overtook him and kissed his feet, saying, ‘ Nicholas, why dost thou conceal thyself from me ? Thou art my helper, and he who has delivered my soul and my daughters’ from hell.’

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‘ I will wash my hands among the innocent : and will compass Thy altar, O Lord.’—Ps. xxv. 6.

## December 7.

### S. Ambrose, Bishop.

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AMBROSE was of noble family, and was governor of Milan A.D. 374, when a bishop was to be chosen for that great see. As the Arian heretics were many and fierce, he was present to preserve order during the election. Though only a catechumen, it was the will of God that he should himself be chosen by acclamation; and, in spite of his utmost resistance, he was baptized and consecrated. He rose at once to the full height of his office, gave all his goods to the poor, and led a life of singular austerity, penance, and humility. He was unwearied in every duty of a pastor, full of sympathy and charity, gentle and condescending in things indifferent, but inflexible in matters of principle. He showed his fearless zeal in braving the anger of the Empress Justina, by resisting and foiling her impious attempt to give one of the churches of Milan to the Arians, and by rebuking and leading to penance the really great Emperor Theodosius. He was the friend and consoler of S. Monica in all her sorrows, and in 387 he had the joy of admitting to the Church her son, S. Augustine, who has left us in his *Confessions* a living picture of the life and work of the Saint, and attests the miracles which followed his discovery of the bodies of S. Gervasius and S. Protasius A.D. 386. He died A.D. 397, full of years and of honours, and is revered by the Church of God as one of her greatest Doctors.

## The Fear of God.

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Whence came to S. Ambrose his grandeur of mind, his clearness of insight, his intrepidity in maintaining the faith and discipline of the Church? Whence but from his contempt of the world, from his fearing God alone?

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‘The fear of God sets us free from the fear of His enemies.’—*S. Ambrose.*

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Theodosius had, in a moment of irritation, punished most cruelly a sedition of the inhabitants of Thessalonica. S. Ambrose, regardless of his own safety, remonstrated with him firmly, separated him from the communion of the Church, and would not restore him until he had done suitable penance. Theodosius, who had many noble and generous qualities, revered him as the only real bishop, he said, he had met with, followed his advice in all things, and at last died in his arms.

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‘The eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear Him; He is their powerful protector and strong stay, a defence from the heat, and a cover from the sun at noon.’—*Ecclus. xxxiv. 19.*

December 8.

**Ven. Ursula Benincasa.**

URSULA was consecrated at her birth to Mary Immaculate, whose glory she was to spread among men. Being left early an orphan, she lived with her brother and sister in extreme hardships, yet she was always willing and cheerful; she would leave her sick-bed to carry her brother his dinner; and the three children thus led, with no other guidance, lives of religious exactness and prayer. As she toiled at her loom, she had the picture of Mary before her, and was constantly rapt in ecstasy by visions of the Mother of God. On the death of her brother she retired to a cell at Mt. S. Elmo, above Naples, her native city, where by her extraordinary influence she caused a church to be built in honour of Mary Immaculate. Moved by the Spirit of God, she visited Gregory XIII. at Rome, and declared that unless penance were done God would scourge the world for its sins. S. Philip Neri was charged to try her spirit; he treated her as an impostor, kept her in close confinement, had her head shaved, exorcised her daily, and severely punished her for her constant ecstasies. After seven months of searching trials he formally approved her sanctity, and with his usual holy playfulness crowned her with his biretta in token of her victory. Ursula, full of gratitude to Philip, returned to Naples, and there instituted a Congregation of the Theatine nuns of the Immaculate Conception and the devotion of the Blue Scapular. She died A.D. 1618.



## Devotion to the Immaculate Conception.

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If thou wouldst put off the old man, and cleanse thyself from all defilement of sin, be clothed in the robe of Mary Immaculate, and bear it without stain.

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‘O Mary, through thy pure and immaculate conception obtain for me purity of body and sanctity of soul.’—*Indulgenced Prayer*.

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Once when Ursula was in ecstasy on the feast of the Purification our Lady appeared with the Divine Child in her arms, clothed in a white robe and light blue mantle, and surrounded by maidens in like dress. ‘Weep no more, Ursula,’ she said, ‘but listen to what my Jesus and yours will say to you.’ The Holy Child then told her of the Order she was to found, of its rule, and what blessings were to be gained by wearing the blue habit. Ursula thereupon asked whether devout servants of Mary Immaculate, living in the world, might not have like benefits, and knew her prayer was granted when she saw angels scattering scapulars about the earth. To gain the indulgences it is sufficient to be duly enrolled, and to wear the scapular; but immense additional indulgences can be obtained by reciting six *Paters*, *Aves*, and *Glorias* in honour of the Holy Trinity and of Mary conceived without sin.

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‘Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.’—Cant. iv. 7.

## December 9.

### **B. Peter Fourrier.**

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PETER FOURRIER was born in Lorraine A.D. 1565. At the age of twenty he entered the Order of the Canons Regular at Chaumouzey, and there found himself in a most corrupt monastery. He led a life of the strictest observance amidst luxury and scandal, and endured many bitter trials from his relaxed brethren. In 1597 he was appointed to the poor and depraved parish of Mattaincourt, where his zeal and charity won the hearts of his flock, who again approached the Sacraments and eagerly adopted the popular devotions, especially one in honour of the Immaculate Conception, which he established amongst them. To provide for their temporal interests he set up a savings-bank, an insurance company, and a court of justice, where claims might be equitably settled without the strife of law. Lastly, he founded his celebrated Congregation of Notre Dame for the training of poor girls, which before his death numbered thirty-two houses. The fury of Satan was excited by such triumphs of grace. He assaulted M. Fourrier constantly, and at one time had possessed no fewer than forty of his flock. But the holy priest overcame him by fasts and prayer, and expelled him from the bodies of his victims. In 1621 M. Fourrier was charged with the apparently hopeless task of reforming his own Order; yet eight houses had adopted strict observance when civil strife drove him into exile. He died in Burgundy, aged seventy-six.

## Working for God.

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Peter gave himself over to the care of one poor parish, seeking only the salvation of his flock ; yet by that hidden work he became a Saint, and founded those noble institutes which have spread over the whole Christian world. Strive then most perfectly to perform your own humble duties for God's sake. So will you reap untold blessings and merit eternal life.

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‘ As Jesus Christ gives Himself to men in the Blessed Sacrament, seeking no return but the good that they shall receive in Communion, so do I give myself to you this day, not for the sake of any honour or advantage I may receive thereby, but only for the salvation of your souls, which I am resolved to procure, even should it cost me my life.’—*B. Peter Fourier.*

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His flock were indeed his children. ‘ It is true,’ said he one day to his brother, who had come to consult him, and whom he dismissed in order to attend to a poor parishioner,—‘ it is true you are my brother and my nearest earthly relation, but this is my child, who would accuse me before God of injustice did I not give him the preference over you.’

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‘ Work your work before the time, and He will give you your reward in His time.’—Ecclus. li. 38.

December 10.

## **S. Osmund of Salisbury.**

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OF the many nobles who came into England with William of Normandy, none was more illustrious in name and sanctity than Osmund, Count of Séez. His life in the world was that of a Saint in all the difficult states of courtier, soldier, and magistrate. Although elevated to the earldom of Dorset, and occupying the high position of Chancellor of England, the favour of his prince and the smiles of fortune had no charms for a heart which loved and valued only heavenly goods ; and he who had long enjoyed the world as if he enjoyed it not, distributed his goods to the poor, and embraced the ecclesiastical state. But he was not permitted to enjoy for long his beloved obscurity, for God called him to the care of a diocese, and in 1078 he was consecrated Bishop of Salisbury. Being in everything zealous for the glory of God's house, he erected and beautified many churches, and made various pious foundations in his diocese. At the Council of Rockingham, in 1095, he was induced to unite with those who, out of complacency to the king, opposed S. Anselm ; but he speedily saw and confessed his error, and received absolution from the Saint. A severe illness before death, borne with great patience, did away with whatever stain he had contracted by his fault, and he departed to God, whose glory alone he had sought on earth, on the 4th of December, 1099.

## Reverence in Divine Worship.

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We shall never be fervent in prayer till we give up all irreverent postures, and kneel as humble suppliants before the majesty of God.

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‘Twofold is our nature, twofold also is the adoration which we offer to God. We adore Him spiritually by the inward devotion of the mind; we adore Him corporally by the outward humiliation of our body; and as in all worship the outward act is referred to the inward, so by the signs of humility, which are manifested in the body, the soul is stirred to subject itself to God.’—*S. Thomas Aquinas*.

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Much confusion had arisen from the introduction, by the foreign clergy who came into England, of the particular ecclesiastical rites and offices of the places from which they came. To remove this inconvenience, and to regulate the worship of the Church with the utmost decency, piety, and devotion, S. Osmund adjusted the ceremonial of divine worship in points which were before at the discretion of those who officiated; and thus he has left a lasting monument of his name in the Sarum Missal, the work which nearly all England used in public worship for about five centuries.

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‘Put off the shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.’—Exod. iii. 5.

## December 11.

### S. Dionysius the Great.

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S. DIONYSIUS was born of heathen parents. After his conversion he became a disciple of the learned Origen. Later on he succeeded his master in the care of the famous catechetical school at Alexandria, and in 247 he was consecrated bishop of that city. For seventeen years he held this see, which then ranked next to that of Rome, and he ruled it well, and came forth victorious from trials which were manifold and life-long in the strength of his humility. He was assailed by the heathen persecution, which drove him once and again into banishment. And he has told us the story of his heroic sufferings and apostolic zeal in the midst of this fiery trial, only because the slander of an envious Christian forced him to the folly, as he calls it, of justifying himself. Even then he detracts from his own renown, by dwelling on the praise of others, and by making a touching avowal of his own imperfections. In the same spirit of meekness and humility he restored peace to the Church when it was disturbed by internal disputes; he won sinners to penance and erring Christians to the truth; and he himself, at the bidding of the Pope, corrected incidental errors in his own language on certain matters of doctrine. It was in his old age that he gave this last proof of his humility, shortly before the close of a life which has earned for him the glorious title of Dionysius the Great.

## Humility.

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God will do nothing for us till we are humble. Whenever we feel tempted to take pride or pleasure in ourselves, let us reflect that this comes from the devil, who would fain draw us away from God, back to our own nothingness and sin.

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‘So capital a point is humility, that we are not left to learn it from any common teacher. It is our Divine Saviour Himself who says, “Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.”’—S. *Dionysius the Great*.

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Few even among the Fathers of the Church can be compared for learning and talents to S. Dionysius, and few have taken so great a part in the defence of the holy faith. When he was presiding over the theological school of Alexandria he read, as his study required, many works of heretics, in order to refute them. Yet so little did he trust himself, so much did he fear the danger to his own soul, that it needed a vision to encourage and reassure him. Our Lord Himself appeared before the future Saint and Doctor, and addressed him thus: ‘Read all that cometh to thy hand, for thou art fit to correct and to examine all.’ Happy they who, like Dionysius the Great, put their faith under the guard of their humility!

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‘*Exaltavit humiles*,—He hath exalted the humble.’—Luke i. 52.

## December 12.

### Blessed Silvanus.

THE Blessed Silvanus was one of the most celebrated fathers of the desert in the fourth century. By careful vigilance over his senses and his heart, he attained to a rare degree of union with God and an eminent state of contemplation. He once confessed that he had never allowed in his heart a single thought that could raise God's anger against him. God rewarded this great purity of heart by the bestowal of the gift of wisdom. Although his advice was eagerly sought by the solitaries, Silvanus refused to live with more than one disciple, for fear of disturbing the continual application of his mind to God. His intimate communications with God were manifested exteriorly by the brilliancy of his countenance and of his whole body, which sometimes shone as that of an angel, while celestial spirits were often seen to wait upon him. But his humility could not brook the admiration these graces attracted, and he would often say, 'Unhappy is the man who has more reputation than merit.' From his union with God he learnt a charity towards sinners more divine than human, which saved many souls from great danger through discouragement. He said, 'If you are obliged to reprove another, beware of becoming worse than he. If you hear your neighbour spoken against, answer that you are not his judge, but a sinner buried in the grave of his own misery, and that a dead man has no concern with the conduct of others.'



## Union with God.

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If we love God truly we shall, like the Blessed Silvanus, acquire the holy habit of living in His presence, and conversing with Him as a child with his father, banish from our hearts all that can distract them from this consoling exercise.

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‘Resolve, in regard to God, to be very faithful in observing His commandments, and practising with patience, sweetness, and love every act of virtue of which He sends you the occasion.’—*B. Silvanus.*

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After seeing in vision the torments of hell and the glory of heaven, Silvanus shed tears continually, and would hardly leave his cell. If he did, he kept his hood drawn over his eyes, saying, ‘Wherefore should I look upon this light of earth, which can be of no service to my soul?’ Being asked by his disciple one day to water the garden for him, Silvanus did so, but he kept his hood so low, that he could only see the earth at his feet. Being asked the reason, he answered simply, ‘That my eyes may not see the trees, and so cause my mind to be distracted from God.’

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‘I set the Lord always in my sight, for He is at my right hand, that I be not moved.’—Ps. xv. 8.

December 13.

## **S. Lucy, Virgin, Martyr.**

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THE mother of S. Lucy suffered four years from an issue of blood, and the help of man failed. Mother and daughter went from Syracuse to Catania, and sought help from God. S. Lucy reminded her mother that a woman in the Gospel had been healed of the same disorder. 'S. Agatha,' she said, 'stands ever in the sight of Him for whom she died. Only touch her sepulchre with faith, and you will be healed.' They spent the night praying by the tomb, till, overcome by weariness, both fell asleep. S. Agatha appeared in vision to S. Lucy, and calling her sister, foretold her mother's recovery and her own martyrdom. That instant the cure was effected; and in her gratitude the mother allowed her daughter to distribute her wealth among the poor, and consecrate her virginity to Christ.

A young man, to whom she had been promised in marriage, accused her as a Christian to the heathen; but for this pure soul, on fire with the love of Christ, martyrdom was easy. 'I have sacrificed,' she said to Christ, 'all that I had: now I offer the one sacrifice which remains—myself.' Our Lord, by a special miracle, saved from outrage this virgin whom He had chosen for His own. The fire kindled around her did her no hurt. Then the sword was plunged into her heart, and the promise made at the tomb of S. Agatha was fulfilled.

## Love of Christ.

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The Saints had to bear sufferings and temptations greater far than yours. How did they overcome them? By the love of Christ. Nourish this pure love by meditating on the mysteries of Christ's life; and above all by devotion to the Holy Eucharist, which is the antidote against sin, and the pledge of eternal life.

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'If we have Thee, what more would we? Art not Thou enough for him who loves?'—*S. Bonaventure.*

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Although oil and resin were poured on the fire which was kindled around the Saint, S. Lucy remained unscathed, and even when the sword was buried in her heart, she did not die at once. Presently, the purpose was seen for which our Lord interposed to delay her death. He willed to visit her once more in His human nature during her earthly pilgrimage, and so take her to Himself. For after she was already transfixed by the sword, a priest came to her side bearing her Divine Spouse in the Blessed Sacrament. She received her Love beneath the Eucharistic veils, and then went to behold Him for ever face to face.

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'That you may be able to comprehend with all the Saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth knowledge.'—Eph. iii. 18.

## December 14.

### B. Andrew Bobola.

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UPON the 16th of May 1657, near a butcher's stall in a city of Polesia, there lay upon the roadway the mutilated body of a saintly Jesuit. He had suffered with incredible sweetness a martyrdom of unspeakable atrocity at the hands of the Cossacks. The sabre had almost severed his hands and feet ; the torch had melted his flesh ; a crown of twisted oak had well-nigh crushed his skull ; the knife had stripped his back and head of skin ; sharp reeds pierced each finger-nail, his lips and nostrils were slit, his tongue had been torn away by the roots. The sword had at last despatched his soul to heaven. His body wrought many miracles, remaining incorrupt to our own day. What preparation had fitted him for so supreme a trial ? There is little extraordinary in a life of sixty-five years. As a child he was innocent and obedient, as a youth diligent and modest ; an instinctive love of the Society of Jesus determined his career. A thirst for suffering burnt in him as a novice. As a priest he was known as the hunter of souls. He toiled bravely through a terrible plague. He preached diligently from town to town, and for many long years he bore patiently the insults and outrages of a wanton populace, who dogged his steps along the unfailing round of daily duties, which Andrew Bobola began and accomplished for the love of Jesus Christ.

## Courage in Suffering.

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Bear patiently and sweetly bodily sufferings, and prepare for the day of trial, as the blessed Andrew did, by the courageous endurance of the daily crosses incident to your state.

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‘Dispose yourself, like a good and faithful servant of Christ, to bear bravely the cross of your Lord, who was crucified for love of you.’—*Imitation*.

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‘He is a monster,’ they screamed; ‘let us give him claws!’ and they drove in sharp spikes of reed under every nail of both his hands. While every instant the holy man felt as if his soul and body would snap asunder, he invoked unceasingly the most sweet names of Jesus and Mary. They then bethought them to cut out his tongue, and, that he might feel it the more, they opened a great gash in his throat, and tore it out by the roots with all the strength of a ferocious rage. Then that glorious athlete of our Lord Jesus Christ, trying in vain to repeat that sweet name so deeply graven in his heart, became insensible.

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‘Fear not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul.’—Matt. x. 28.

**December 15.**  
**Ven. Anna Maria Taigi.**

ANNA MARIA was born of poor parents in Siena, A.D. 1769. She was educated in Rome, and began life as a servant-maid, fond of dress, and full of vain thoughts. At twenty she married, and soon after by chance confessed to a Servite father, who, being warned of her future sanctity, disclosed to her the danger of her soul. Laying aside her fine clothes, she became a tertiary of the Trinitarians, and began a life of stern mortification, at the same time perfectly fulfilling her duties of wife and mother. Before long a luminous disc, like a sun, in which she saw things past, present, and future, appeared to her, and was with her for forty-seven years, till her death. Moved by the Holy Spirit, she offered herself as a victim of expiation for the sins of the world and the evils afflicting the Church. She became the director of many young men, whose temptations she clearly foresaw, and, though a poor and illiterate sempstress, was consulted by prelates and statesmen, and was supernaturally informed of distant political events. Her prophecies were most remarkable, and many of them have been already fulfilled. Once, as she lay sick, our Lord appeared to her and gave the gift of healing to her hand, with which she afterwards effected many wonderful cures. By an agony of seven months, and a death of utter desolation without the Sacraments, she, whose life had been modelled on her Master's, was found worthy to have some share also in His passion. She died in 1837.

## **Knowledge of Heavenly Things.**

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The routine of every-day commonplace duties is no hindrance to a free intimacy with God. He will disclose His hidden ways to you in proportion as you follow your vocation faithfully, whether in the world or the cloister.

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The Saint would cry out with holy familiarity, as in the midst of her work she felt a sudden ecstasy : 'Leave me in peace, Lord ; leave me to my occupation. I am a poor mother of a family—retire, retire.'

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Irresistible raptures of Divine love would come upon V. Anna Maria when she was engaged in the kitchen, and busy perhaps skimming the saucepan, and then the torrent of spiritual consolations would oblige her to lean against the wall, where she would remain for some time insensible. On returning to herself, her fear was to find the fire burnt out or the vessel upset ; but to her surprise all was found to be in perfect order.

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Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams ; and upon My servants indeed, and upon My handmaids, will I pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy.'—Acts ii. 17, 18.

December 16.

**SS. Nilus and Theodulus,  
Solitaries.**

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RICH, noble, and virtuous, S. Nilus was made governor of Constantinople by the Emperor Theodosius. United in marriage to a wife he tenderly loved, he yet abandoned everything at the call of God. His wife consented to a separation more painful than death, and about the year 390, leaving her one child, Nilus took his youngest, Theodulus, to the desert of Sinai, where they led lives of eminent perfection, putting in practice S. Nilus's own maxim, 'We must praise God by our words, serve Him by our actions, and adore Him by our thoughts.' After many combats with the devils, whom he overcame by faith, prayer, and the sign of the Cross, he tasted great peace ; but this peace was disturbed by an irruption of Saracens, who drove Nilus to the mountains, and carried off Theodulus to be sacrificed. After burying the martyred solitaries, Nilus, overwhelmed with grief, but submissive to God's will, long sought Theodulus in vain. Hearing he was a slave in Eleusis, Nilus hastened thither, and prostrated himself in church to thank God before he would see the face of his son. The Bishop of Eleusis ransomed Theodulus, and ordained them both priests, when they returned to Sinai and fulfilled the vow each had made, to serve God yet more faithfully than before. Nilus died in peace at a great age.



## Obedience to the Will of God.

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God does not ask from all the great sacrifices He required from S. Nilus ; but, in His goodness, He gives us all some things to renounce or to suffer for Him, and it is by our loving submission to His will that we show ourselves to be Christians.

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‘Look upon the causes of joy or of sadness in this life as a shadow, or as a wheel. The shadow vanishes and the wheel ceases not to turn.’—*S. Nilus.*

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When Theodulus was taken prisoner by the Saracens, they prepared an altar, a sword, and incense, intending to sacrifice him to Venus at the rising of the morning star. Rather than attempt flight, Theodulus abandoned himself to the will of God, and spent the night prostrate in prayer. His prayer was heard ; the Saracens slept until the hour of sacrifice was past, and therefore determined to sell him ; but, finding no buyers, they hung a sword round his neck as a sign they would kill him. Again he trusted his life to Providence. Touched with pity, a merchant bought him, and he was thus finally delivered from his terrible foes.

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‘His will is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he shall meditate day and night.’—Ps. i. 2.

## December 17.

### **S. Cornelius, Pope, Martyr.**

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IN the year 251 Cornelius was chosen to fill the Apostolic See. Already past middle age, he had served in all the degrees of the ministry ; yet so far was he from desiring the dignity to which he was raised, that he suffered violence, writes S. Cyprian, and was promoted to it by force and compulsion. The times were full of danger ; there were enemies within as well as without the Church. Novatian, once a Stoic philosopher, now one of the leading Roman clergy, attacked the penitential discipline laid on those who, having apostatized during the late troubles, were now desirous of being reconciled to the Christian community ; pretending that it was unlawful to admit such persons to penance, or to give them absolution, whatever their dispositions might be. The action of the Holy See was prompt and decisive : a Council of sixty bishops, held under S. Cornelius, confirmed the existing canons on the subject, and at the same time excommunicated Novatian and his adherents. Meanwhile the death of Decius, which took place in the same year, gave no relief to the Christians ; Gallus, his successor, enforcing still more rigorously the laws against them. Cornelius was the first to be apprehended at Rome ; and, after a six months' imprisonment, he received the crown of martyrdom, September 14th, 252.

## Compassion for Sinners.

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The surest way of keeping our souls in God's holy grace is to have a humble compassion for those who have fallen, remembering our own sinfulness.

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'But this is proper to perfect souls—to hate only the sin in the sinner, and to love the man himself. These when they punish do so, not with a harsh severity, but with the moderation of justice.'—*S. Augustine.* 

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So many and so scandalous had been the apostasies under the late persecutions, that during the long vacancy of the Holy See after the martyrdom of S. Fabian the Roman clergy adopted, and even recommended to the African bishops—already sufficiently inclined to severity—the most rigorous measures against the lapsed. Hardly, however, was S. Cornelius seated on the Apostolic throne when, in his compassion, he absolved and admitted them to Communion. The infallible instinct of Rome has been in all ages the same. The Vicar of Christ has ever had his eyes fixed on the example of his Master, who came 'not to call the just, but sinners to repentance.'

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'There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance.'—Luke xv. 7.

## December 18.

### S. Odo of Cluny.

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ON Christmas-eve, A.D. 877, a noble of Aquitaine implored our Lady to grant him a son. His prayer was heard ; Odo was born, and his grateful father offered him to S. Martin, saying, 'O Martin, crown and gem of priests, take this boy as thine own.' Odo grew in wisdom and in virtue, and his father longed to see him shine at court. But the attraction of grace was too strong. Odo's heart was sad and his health failed, until he forsook the world, and sought refuge under the shadow of S. Martin at Tours. There he studied and wrote, and ripened in grace, especially in devotion to his patron Saint. He would go far at night to pray at his tomb, wrote hymns in his honour, and held his image ever in his heart and his example before his eyes. Later on he took the habit of S. Benedict at Baume, and was compelled to become abbot of the great abbey of Cluny, which was then building. He ruled it with the hand of a master and the winningness of a Saint. The church rose stately and fair ; the service of God was celebrated with splendour, and the holy rule enforced with exactness. The Pope sent for him often to act as peacemaker between contending princes, and it was on one of those missions of mercy that he was taken ill at Rome. At his urgent entreaty he was borne back to Tours, where he died at the feet of 'his own S. Martin,' A.D. 942.

## Devotion to Patron Saints.

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‘It needs only,’ says F. Newman, ‘for a Catholic to show devotion to any Saint, in order to receive special benefits from his intercession.’

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‘Choose some particular Saints, that you may enter more deeply into their spirit and imitate them, and have an especial confidence in their intercession.’—*S. Francis of Sales.*

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When the fever came on S. Odo at Rome, and his body was racked with pains, he felt a yearning desire to breathe out his soul at the shrine of S. Martin, the first love of his soul, and his great attraction through life. And he heard in vision a voice which said, ‘O holy soul, and beloved of God, thy summons home has gone forth; but Martin obtains a delay for thee, and the strength thou needest.’ At once his pains lessened, and he set out on his long journey, upheld by ‘his exceeding devotion to S. Martin.’ He reached Tours on S. Martin’s-day; and on the octave, after a week of longing desires for God, and humble preparation for death, he uttered the name of Martin, and said, ‘O Christ, spare Thou whom Thou hast redeemed,’ and died.

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‘And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the Saints ascended up before God.’—Apoc. viii. 4.

December 19.  
**S. Macrina, Virgin.**

S. MACRINA belonged, both by father and mother, to some of the most illustrious and wealthy families in Asia Minor, and families equally eminent for sanctity. Her paternal grandparents, during the persecution, lost their large possessions, and had to leave home for the mountain forests, where they lived for seven years. Her maternal grandfather lost for the faith both his property and his life. Her mother, too, is a saint, and three of her brothers. These three were bishops, and two of them are fathers and doctors. Macrina was the eldest of ten. Her betrothed husband dying before marriage, she chose a single life. For a time she remained at home, and was the comfort and stay of her widowed mother, taking the oversight of the house and family, and of their large estates, and still more of their progress in holiness. First of all, by her obedience and usefulness, she won over her mother to a religious life; then she turned to her brothers. First she took in hand the eldest, and he became S. Basil the Great, father of Eastern monachism. Then she turned to Naucratus, an accomplished and attractive youth, and he retired to the forest, where he tended the sick and aged poor, supporting them by his skill in the chase. Then came Gregory, who was married. Through her influence his wife became a deaconess; and he took orders, ending by being Bishop of Nyssa, a saint and a doctor. The youngest was Peter: he, too, became a bishop and a saint.

## True Family Affection.

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The children of one home, brothers and sisters, may love each other with an intense affection when young; but that love will not stand the wear and tear of time, unless it be baptised in the grace and in the image of the Eternal Trinity, the God of Love. Blessed are they whose brotherhood is not only of blood, but of spirit, and recorded, not in an earthly register merely, but in the Book of Life.

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‘The Immaculate Lord has consecrated to Himself an immaculate family, even amid the thick body of filth of human sin.’—*S. Ambrose*.

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Macrina at length retired to a convent. There, struck down by fever, her brother Gregory, then a bishop, went to see her. He found her lying on two boards, one being her bed, the other her pillow. Seeing in him not only the brother, but the bishop, she contrived to raise herself on her knees to receive his blessing; then she died. There were no clothes in the house to bury her withal, and Gregory gave up for that purpose his episcopal cloke.

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‘Andrew was one of the two who had heard from John and followed Him. He findeth first his brother Simon, and saith to him, We have found the Messiah; which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus.’—*John i. 40*

December 20.

## **S. Catherine of Alexandria.**

CATHERINE was a noble virgin of Alexandria. Before her baptism, as the acts relate, she saw in vision the Blessed Virgin ask her Son to receive her among His servants, but the Divine Infant turned away. After baptism Catherine saw the same vision, when Jesus Christ received her with great affection, and espoused her before the court of heaven. It is in any case certain that she had early consecrated herself to God, and that when the impious tyrant, Maximin II., came to Alexandria, and the other noble ladies yielded to his will, Catherine alone stood firm. Fascinated by her wisdom, beauty, and wealth, he vehemently urged his suit. At last in his rage and disappointment he ordered her to be stripped and scourged. According to Baronius, she fled to the Arabian mountains, where the soldiers overtook her, and after many torments put her to death. Her body was laid in Mount Sinai, and a beautiful legend relates how Catherine had prayed that no man might see or touch her body after death, and that angels bore it to the grave. A noble monastery rose over the shrine, and Christian warriors going to the crusades placed their hope of victory in the patronage of the invincible virgin. The marriage of S. Catherine, her martyrdom with the wheel broken at her feet, and her entombment by the angels have been the chosen subjects of Christian art, while the miracles wrought by her prayers have confirmed the devotion of the faithful.



## Constancy.

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The constancy displayed by the Saints in their glorious martyrdom cannot be isolated from their previous lives, but is their natural sequence. If we wish to emulate their perseverance, let us first imitate their fidelity to grace.

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‘The most powerful weapon against the devils is an earnest life and a pure trust in God.’—*S. Antony.*

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Among the devout clients of S. Catherine, no one perhaps has drunk more deeply of her spirit or profited more by her intercession than the heroic maid of Orleans, Joan of Arc. It was a vision of S. Catherine which first inspired the simple peasant-girl to undertake the deliverance of her people. The white standard, with the *fleur-de-lis* and the holy names, ‘Jesus, Maria,’ embroidered thereon, which led her followers to victory, was made on a model which the Saint had shown her ; and the sword which she wore at her side, but which was never stained with blood, was discovered in the church of S. Catherine of Fierbois, in the exact spot that the Saint had revealed. Above all, her spotless purity and unconquerable constancy in a shameful death proved her a true daughter of the glorious virgin martyr.

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‘Take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect.’—Ephes. vi. 13.

## December 21.

### S. Thomas, Apostle.

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S. THOMAS was one of the fishermen on the Lake of Galilee whom our Lord called to be His Apostles. There are only three incidents related of him in the Gospel, but these are enough to make his character more familiar to us than that of any other except SS. Peter and John. By nature slow to believe, too apt to see difficulties, and to look at the dark side of things, he had withal a most sympathetic, loving, and courageous heart. Once when Jesus spoke of the mansions in His Father's house, S. Thomas, in his simplicity, asked, 'Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?' When Jesus turned to go towards Bethany to the grave of Lazarus, the desponding Apostle at once feared the worst for his beloved Lord, yet cried out bravely to the rest, 'Let us also go, and die with Him.'

After the Resurrection incredulity again prevailed, and whilst the wounds of the crucifixion were imprinted vividly on his affectionate mind, he would not credit the report that Christ had indeed risen. But the actual sight of the pierced Hands and Side and the gentle rebuke of his Saviour went home at once to his generous heart. Unbelief was gone for ever; and his faith and ours has ever triumphed in the joyous utterance into which he broke, 'My Lord and my God!'

## **Triumph of Faith.**

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Cast away all disquieting doubts, and learn to triumph over old weaknesses as S. Thomas did, who 'by his ignorance hath instructed the ignorant, and by his incredulity hath served for the faith of all ages.'

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'By his confession and touching the wounds he taught us,' says S. Augustine, 'what we ought to believe. He saw one thing and believed another. His eyes beheld the Humanity alone, but by his faith he confessed the Divinity.'

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He who once saw danger in the little journey to Bethany, says S. John Chrysostom, now, full of courage, carries the faith further than any of the other Apostles. The mission of S. Thomas was to the far East. He planted the faith among Medes and Persians, in Parthia and Bactria, and even penetrated into India. There, in the city of Meliapore, he finally won his martyr's crown at the hands of an infidel, who slew him with the thrust of a lance.

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'Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed : blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed.'—John xx. 29.

## December 22.

### S. Felix of Valois.

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S. FELIX was son of the Count of Valois. His mother took him, at his birth, to obtain the blessing of S. Bernard, and throughout his youth did all she could to cultivate in him a spirit of charity. The unjust divorce between his parents matured a long-formed resolution of leaving the world; and confiding his mother to her pious brother, Thibault, Count of Champagne, he took the Cistercian habit at Clairvaux. His rare virtues drew on him such admiration that, with S. Bernard's consent, he fled to Italy, where he led an austere life with an aged hermit. At this time he was ordained priest, and his old counsellor having died he returned to France, and for many years lived as a solitary at Cerfroid. Here God inspired him with the desire of founding an Order for the redemption of Christian captives, and moved S. John of Matha, then a youth, to conceive a similar wish. S. John sought out the aged Felix in his retreat, and there together they drew up the rules of the Order of the Holy Trinity. Many disciples gathered round them; and seeing that the time had come for further action, the two Saints made a pilgrimage to Rome to obtain the confirmation of the Order from Innocent III. Their prayer was granted, and the last fifteen years of Felix's long life were spent in organizing and developing his rapidly increasing foundations. He died A.D. 1213.

## Zeal for the Conversion of Sinners.

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‘Think how much,’ says S. John Chrysostom, ‘and how often thy mouth has sinned, and thou wilt devote thyself entirely to the conversion of sinners. For by this one means thou wilt blot out all thy sins, in that thy mouth will become the mouth of God.’

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‘It is a greater miracle, by the word of preaching, or by the aid of prayer, to convert a sinner from his sin than to raise the dead to life.’—S. *Gregory*.

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S. Felix was seventy years of age, and worn out with austerities, when he undertook his journey on foot to Rome. Burning, however, with zeal, and longing to save all those poor suffering souls whose rescue he had planned, he seemed to feel no fatigue; so that S. John, his companion, being amazed, could not forbear asking him how it was that neither the length of the way nor its dangers seemed to exist for him. Felix being thus forced to speak, acknowledged that he saw nearly all the time an angel before him, who held him up over the difficult passes, and spoke words of hope and courage to him which made him forget all but the object he had in view.

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‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon us, because the Lord has anointed me to preach a release to the captives.’—Isai. lxi. 1.

## December 23.

### S. Apollo, Abbot.

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S. APOLLO retired to the desert when fifteen with his brother, whom after death he saw in vision placed among the apostles. Forty years he passed in holy solitude. He ate only a few raw herbs, and made a hundred prayers by day and as many by night. Inspired to undertake the direction of souls, he consented not until God promised to preserve him from vanity. His sanctity drew many to live under his guidance. He taught them to expel wrong thoughts at the very outset, saying they would thus crush the head of the serpent, and so deprive his body of strength and life. He told them to measure their progress in virtue by their detachment, and led them by purity of heart to holy joy. He suffered not a sorrowful countenance, and if he saw any one mournful who hesitated to disclose the reason, he told him by supernatural light the secret of his heart. He exhorted them to communicate frequently, and many lived almost without other food. Some passed the night in meditation alone in the desert, the rest spent it with the saint praising God. They were constantly singing psalms, and, with their white habits and joyful faces, resembled a choir of angels. Of the five hundred monks, there was scarcely one without the gift of miracles. Apollo died at a great age, full of merit, about 395.

## Joy in God.

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The joy felt by Apollo and his disciples is described by their historian as far surpassing all delights of earth. Let us endeavour to share their happiness by copying their principal virtues, purity of heart, and a holy frequentation of the Sacraments.

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‘Let heathens grieve, let Jews weep, let the wicked sigh without ceasing; but let the just rejoice. If those who prize earthly goods are happy in possessing perishable treasures, why are we not filled with joy in our hope of obtaining glory which is infinite, and happiness that is eternal?’—*S. Apollo.*

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S. Apollo neglected no means of entertaining holy joy amongst his disciples. One Easter when they were assembled he told them to pray God to show whether it were His will that they might have better fare than usual that day. All answered they were unworthy to obtain this. The saint then prayed with a joyful smile, and immediately strangers appeared, bringing ample provision of all kinds of food, new bread, honey, milk, and magnificent fruits out of season or unknown in Egypt. They retired hastily as if pressed for time, and the holy monks blessed God for His fatherly care.

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‘Always rejoice. Pray without ceasing. In all things give thanks.’—1 Thess. v. 16.

**December 24.**  
**B. John Leonardi.**

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JOHN LEONARDI was of humble birth, and began life as an apprentice in a chemist's shop at Lucca, where he became a fervent member of a brotherhood just established on the plan of the Oratory at Rome. He thus conceived so great a devotion for S. Philip and his exercises, that when they were transferred to the city of Pisa, Leonardi travelled some hundred miles a week to assist at them, going and returning after his day's work. At the age of twenty-six the death of his father enabled him to realize his long-formed wish of studying for the priesthood. Knowing no Latin, he took his place among the youngest boys at the public schools, and after four years of constant humiliations was ordained priest. His holy, kindly, and gentle ways drew together several young men who served his church, and with this little community he founded his Congregation of the Mother of God. Its object was to win souls after S. Philip's plan, by frequent preaching, popular devotions, and Christian recreation. In 1580 he repaired to Rome to obtain the Pope's blessing on his work, and became the guest and penitent of S. Philip, who at once detected his sanctity. Four years later a violent persecution made him again seek refuge with the Saint. Philip lodged him at S. Girolamo, warmly defended his cause with three successive Pontiffs, and at last established his innocence. Leonardi saw his Congregation spread throughout Italy. He died A.D. 1609.

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## Holy Friendship.

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‘Open not thy heart,’ says the *Imitation*, ‘to every man, but discuss thy business with one that is wise and feareth God.’ B. John Leonardi found such a one in S. Philip, and he never looked for another.

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‘That is true and firmly-cemented Christian friendship which is brought about by no selfish interest, mere bodily presence, or deceitful coaxing flattery, but by the fear of God.’—*S. Jerome*.

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B. Leonardi, shortly after his ordination, converted to God a young shoemaker of evil life named Giorgio Arrichini. He became a most regular member of the Saint’s confraternity, and his sincere contrition inspired a young noble named John Baptist Cioni with a deep regard for him. When then B. Leonardi took Arrichini to educate him for the priesthood, Cioni also begged to live with them, and, being admitted, voluntarily took on himself all the menial work of the house. This generous self-sacrifice confirmed the still wavering vocation of Arrichini, and the two young friends, dissimilar in all but their love of God, became the Saint’s first companions in his Congregation of the Mother of God, and died holy religious in that Institute.

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‘A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality ; and they that fear the Lord shall find Him.’—*Ecclus. vi. 16*.

## December 25.

### **B. Angela of Foligno.**

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B. ANGELA was born at Foligno in Italy, 1309. Marrying early, she passed her youth in frivolity and sin. The cares of a large family were, under God, the means of her conversion. It was in the midst of these responsibilities that she saw her soul's danger, and wept at the sight. Still she dared not make a complete confession, and even communicated many times in sin. At last she broke her fetters and was fully absolved. Her heart was now possessed by a hard and bitter sorrow, which the thought of the Passion alone could soften. By degrees she gave up her rich attire and delicate food, and finally made a vow of perpetual chastity, to be accomplished when circumstances would permit. Yet she felt rather shame than love in these sacrifices, and in her family resented keenly every little slight. God Himself at last completed her conversion. Her mother, a worldly woman, died, and Angela lost in quick succession her husband and her sons. Alone in the world, she gave her whole heart to prayer, and one day, when repeating the 'Our Father,' understood as a new revelation God's goodness and her own ingratitude. She entered the Third Order of S. Francis, and by persevering penance in a few years became a Saint. She died, as she had said of another, buried in the knowledge of her own defects, but risen to taste the sweetness of God.

## God our Father.

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Look upon the Infant Jesus, and learn from Him, as did B. Angela, the love of God your Father in heaven and of Christ your Brother on earth.

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‘I said the “Our Father” with so much contrition and recollection, pronouncing every word, that though I was plunged in great anguish by the thought of my sins, I yet received immense consolation, and tasted something of the bliss God grants His beloved ones. I have never found a better way for realizing His mercy than by saying that prayer which Jesus Himself taught us.’—*B. Angela.*

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The solitude of a sick-bed, constant pain, incessant temptations, the loss of every earthly friend,—all these only convinced B. Angela of her absolute dependence on her Father in heaven. She learned to love poverty, sorrow, and contempt as the sole companions which He had chosen for His Son, and by studying the life of the God-Man she acquired so perfect a detachment, and such an intimate knowledge of the things of God, that the writings of the penitent worldling rank high among the revelations of the Saints.

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‘You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba (Father); and if sons, heirs also : heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.’—Rom. viii. 15, 17.

December 26.

## **S. Stephen, Protomartyr.**

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**THERE** is good reason to believe that S. Stephen was one of the seventy-two disciples of our Blessed Lord. After the Ascension he was chosen one of the seven deacons. His name is placed first, and he is specially praised as 'a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost.' The ministry of the seven was very fruitful; but Stephen especially, 'full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people.' Many adversaries rose up to dispute with him, but 'they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit that spoke.'

At length he was brought before the Sanhedrim, charged, like his Divine Master, with 'blasphemy against Moses and against God.' He boldly upbraided the chief priests with their hard-hearted resistance to the Holy Ghost and with the murder of the 'Just One.' They were stung with anger, and gnashed their teeth against him. But when, 'filled with the Holy Ghost and looking up to heaven, he cried out, "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God," they rushed upon him, and dragging him forth without the city, they stoned him to death, whilst he cried out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."' S. Stephen bears the title of 'protomartyr,' because he was the first who, after our Saviour's death, had the happiness to lay down life for life.

## Forgiveness of Injuries.

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If ever you are tempted to resentment, pray from your heart for him who has offended you.

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Whilst the stones were falling thick upon him, S. Stephen forgot the anguish of death, to pray, like his Lord, for his murderers : ‘ And kneeling down, he cried with a loud voice, “ Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord.’

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Among those who had a hand in S. Stephen’s death, a chief part was borne by Saul of Tarsus, a young Pharisee, full of zeal for the law. A little while afterwards, on the road to Damascus, in the full course of his cruel persecution of the Christians, he was miraculously converted, and became the Apostle S. Paul. Such was the glorious reward of S. Stephen’s dying prayer.

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‘ Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you ; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you ; that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven.’—Matt. v. 44.

## December 27.

### **S. John, Evangelist.**

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By Divine inspiration S. John wrote his own panegyric, when he named himself in his Gospel, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' Our Lord loved above all things virginal purity, and it was this grace which endeared S. John to the Sacred Heart. S. John, the youngest of the Apostles in age, was called to follow Christ on the banks of the Jordan during the first days of our Lord's ministry. He was one of the privileged few present at the Transfiguration and the Agony in the garden. At the Last Supper, his head rested on the bosom of Jesus, and in the hours of the Passion, when others fled or denied their Master, S. John, with a courage which is the prerogative of chastity, kept his place by the side of Jesus, and at the last stood by the Cross with Mary. From the Cross the dying Saviour bequeathed His Mother to the care of the faithful Apostle, who 'from that hour took her to his own;' thus fitly, as S. Austin says, 'to a virgin was the Virgin intrusted.'

After the Ascension, S. John lived first at Jerusalem, and then at Ephesus. He was thrown by Domitian into a cauldron of boiling oil, and is thus reckoned a martyr, though miraculously preserved from hurt. Afterwards he was banished to the isle of Patmos, where he received the heavenly visions described in the Apocalypse. He died at a great age in peace, at Ephesus, in the year 100.

## Purity of Heart.

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S. John is a living example to you of our Lord's saying, 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.'

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'God is seen with the heart ; . . . and just as the light cannot be seen unless with eyes that are pure, so neither is God seen unless that is pure by which He can be seen.'—*S. Augustine.*

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It was S. John's special gift to see and to show forth the mysteries of the Godhead. 'Not undeservedly,' says S. Augustine, 'is this Evangelist compared to the eagle. He has elevated his preaching higher and far more sublimely than the others. They walked with the Lord on the earth as with a man ; but he soars like an eagle above the earth, above the skies, and beyond all created beings ; and reaching to Him by whom all things were made, gazes upon the light of the unchangeable Truth, with those keenest and steadfast eyes of the heart. He has spoken concerning the Divinity as none others have.' So, too, S. John is the one prophetic seer of the New Testament. To him alone was it granted to see and to describe the heavenly Jerusalem, with the Lamb on His throne ; the woman clothed with the sun ; and the army of angelic spirits.

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'But Thou hast upheld me by reason of my innocence ; and hast established me in Thy sight for ever.'—Ps. xi. 13.

December 28.

**S. Simon, Infant Martyr.**

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'HAIL, flowers of the martyrs,' the Church sings in her Office of the Holy Innocents, who were the first to die for Christ; and in every age mere children and infants have gloriously confessed His name. In 1472 the Jews in the city of Trent determined to vent their hate against the Crucified by slaying a Christian child at the coming Passover, and Tobias, one of their number, was deputed to entrap a victim. He found a bright smiling boy named Simon playing outside his home, with no one guarding him. Tobias patted the little fellow's cheek and coaxed him to take his hand. The boy who was not two years old, did so; but he began to call and cry for his mother when he found himself being led from home. Then Tobias gave him a bright coin to look at, and with many kind caresses silenced his grief, and conducted him securely to his house. At midnight on Holy Thursday the work of butchery began. Having gagged his mouth, they held his arms in the form of a cross, while they pierced his tender body with awls and bodkins in blasphemous mockery of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. After an hour's torture the little martyr lifted his eyes to heaven, and gave up his innocent soul. The Jews cast his body into the river; but their crime was discovered and punished, while the holy relics were enshrined in S. Peter's Church at Trent, where they have worked many miracles.



## Power in Infirmary.

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Learn from the infant martyrs that, however weak you may be, you still can suffer for Christ's sake, and, by suffering, win your crown.

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'These martyrs are indeed the work of grace. They confess in silence ; they fight unknowingly ; they triumph unawares ; they die unconsciously ; they find themselves with crowns and palms before they have learnt their very names.'—*S. John Chrysostom.*

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Our own William of Norwich is another of these children martyrs. His parents were simple country folk, but his mother was taught by a vision to expect a Saint in her son. As a boy he fasted thrice a week and prayed constantly, and he was only an apprentice twelve years of age, at a tanner's in Norwich, when he won his crown. A little before Easter, A.D. 1137, he was enticed into a Jew's house, and was there gagged, bound, and crucified in hatred of Christ. Five years passed before the body was found, when it was buried as a saintly relic in the cathedral churchyard. A rose-tree planted hard by flowered miraculously in midwinter, and all manner of sick persons were healed of their diseases at S. William's shrine.

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'Out of the mouths of infants and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise.'—Ps. viii. 2.

December 29.

## **S. Thomas of Canterbury.**

S. THOMAS, son of Gilbert Becket, was born in Southwark, A.D. 1117. When a youth he was attached to the household of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, who sent him to Paris and Bologna to study law. He became Archdeacon of Canterbury; and afterwards was chosen by the king, Henry II., Lord High Chancellor of England. His learning, great abilities, and the services rendered by him to the king and the state gained for him the especial confidence of Henry. The condition of the Church in England was then greatly disordered. The barons robbed it by force. The king seized on the revenues of the bishoprics and abbeys as they fell vacant, and held them for many years by preventing the canonical elections. The morals of the clergy were lax; those of the laity were worse. In 1163 Archbishop Theobald died, and the king insisted on the consecration of S. Thomas in his stead. S. Thomas refused, warning the king that from that hour their friendship would be broken. In the end he yielded, and was consecrated. The conflict at once broke out; S. Thomas resisted the royal customs, which violated the liberties of the Church and the laws of the realm. After six years of contention, partly spent in exile at Sens and Pontigny, S. Thomas, with full foresight of martyrdom before him, returned as a good shepherd to his Church, and on the 29th December, 1170, was martyred in his own cathedral.

## Defence of the Church's Rights.

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'Learn from S. Thomas,' says F. Faber, 'to fight the good fight even to the shedding of blood, or to what men find harder, the shedding of their good name by pouring it out to waste on the earth.'

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'For the name of Jesus and the defence of His Church I am ready to die.'—*Dying words of S. Thomas.*

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Vespers were beginning when the four knights broke into the cathedral, crying, 'Where is the Archbishop? where is the traitor?' The monks fled, and S. Thomas might easily have escaped. But to die thus was the wish of his heart, and he advanced, saying, 'Here I am, no traitor, but archbishop. What seek you?' 'Your life,' they cried. 'Gladly do I give it,' was the reply; and bowing his head, the invincible martyr was hacked and hewn till his soul went to God. Upon the sacred body were found the stripes of his discipline, and the hair-shirt reaching to the knees, and full of vermin from never being removed. Six months later Henry II. submitted to be publicly scourged at the Saint's shrine, and restored to the Church her full rights. S. Thomas is the special patron Saint of the secular clergy of England.

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'Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' Matt. xxii. 21.

**December 30.**  
**Ven. Gaspare del Bufalo.**

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A MIRACULOUS cure of his eyesight marked Gaspare in his infancy as one chosen by God. He was born in Rome in 1786, a time when scandals and disorders were multiplying on the earth ; but the presence of evil seemed only to quicken in his soul a zeal for God's glory, and a devotion to the Precious Blood, which men were trampling under foot. At the age of five he stuffed his little bed with pieces of wood, and, in imitation of S. Aloysius Gonzaga, invented for himself a discipline and a hair-shirt. He turned pale and faint at the sound of a vicious word, and remained silent for two days after his first meeting with a hardened sinner. As a mere schoolboy, in spite of blows and ridicule, he toiled like an apostle for souls ; and afterwards, when a priest and canon of San Marco, won numbers to Christ. In 1810 he was exiled and imprisoned by the French for his fidelity to the Holy See. On the return of Pius VII. he was appointed to give missions. He had vowed to kindle in men's souls love of the Blood of Jesus, and no sickness or dangers could check his delivery of the Divine Word. Followers gathered to his side, and with these he formed the Congregation of the Missioners of the Precious Blood. He said he would die content if a feast were established in Its honour; and in 1849, twelve years after the death of Gaspare, Pius IX. solemnly instituted the feast of the Precious Blood, for the first Sunday in July.

## Devotion to the Precious Blood.

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Learn from V. Gaspare to grow in hatred of sin, love of God, and zeal for souls, by devotion to the Precious Blood.

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‘In these days, when the wicked, in their hatred of the Catholic religion, make open war against it by multiplying vices and sins . . . zeal for God’s glory ought to inflame every soul, like a holy fire, to double the triumphs of the Crucified through the application of the merits of the Precious Blood.’—*Ven. Gaspare del Bufalo.*

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In the thirteenth century, Richard of Cornwall, brother of Henry III., brought from Germany a relic of the Precious Blood. He placed two-thirds of it in a monastery which he built at Ashridge in Hertfordshire, one-third in a similar monastery at Hailes in Gloucestershire, and founded the Congregation of ‘Goodmen’ to guard and honour the relic. In 1847 a Confraternity of the Precious Blood was again established in England by F. Faber, at St. Wilfrid’s Church in Staffordshire. This Confraternity was re-erected in 1850 in the church of the London Oratory, and countless graces and conversions have been obtained by its prayers.

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‘Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb.’—Apoc. xxii. 14.

## December 31. **S. Sylvester, Pope.**

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SYLVESTER was born in Rome towards the close of the third century. He was a young priest when the last but most bloody persecution of the Christians broke out under the tyrant Diocletian. Idols were erected at the corners of the streets, in the market-places, and over the public fountains, so that it was scarcely possible for a Christian to go abroad without being put to the test of offering sacrifice, with the alternative of apostasy or death. During this fiery trial Sylvester strengthened the confessors and martyrs, God preserving his life from many dangers. In 312 a new era set in. Constantine having triumphed under the 'standard of the Cross,' declared himself the protector of the Christians, built them splendid churches, amongst others the Lateran Basilica, the Mother Church of Rome and the world, with a palace for the Pope, who had been the object of the heathen hate. At this juncture Sylvester was elected to the chair of Peter, and was thus the first of the Roman Pontiffs to rule the flock of Christ in security and peace. He profited by these blessings to renew the discipline of the Church, and in two great Councils confirmed her sacred truths. In the Council of Arles he condemned the schism of the Donatists; and in that of Nicæa, the first General Council of the Church, he dealt Arianism its death-blow by declaring that Jesus Christ is the true and very God. Sylvester died A.D. 335.

## Trust in the Church.

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Never forget to thank God daily for having made you a member of His undying Church, and grow daily in your attachment, devotion, and loyalty to the Vicar of Christ.

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‘Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ governs. May Christ preserve us from all ill.’—*Prayer of the Church inscribed on the Vatican Obelisk.*

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S. Sylvester witnessed, indeed, the end of the heathen persecutions, yet other trials soon came upon the rulers of Christ’s Church. Barbarian hordes, Arian Lombards, German emperors, turbulent Italian nobles, foreign usurpers, have in turn assailed the Holy City of Rome. Of the 250 Pontiffs who have sat in Peter’s chair, besides the thirty martyred in the first three centuries, thirty Popes were compelled to go into exile, four were imprisoned, four were unable to set foot in the Eternal City, seven reigned in banishment at Avignon. Thus the condition of the Vicars of Christ is to live as their Master did, in a state of suffering, contradictions, and conflicts; but, like their Master again, they speak in every age the words of eternal truth, and outlive the persecutions of men and Satan with a vitality which comes from God.

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‘Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.’—Matt. xxviii. 20.

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 S. Francis of Assisi, Oct. 4.  
 S. Francis Borgia, Oct. 11.  
 S. Francis Caracciolo, June 4.  
 S. Francis Jerome, May 11.  
 S. Francis of Paula, Apr. 2.  
 S. Francis of Sales, Jan. 29.  
 S. Francis Solano, July 24.  
 S. Francis Xavier, Dec. 3.  
 S. Fructuosus, Feb. 16.  
 S. Fulgentius, Jan. 1.

G.

V. Gaspare del Bufalo, Dec. 30.  
 S. Genesius, Aug. 26.  
 S. Genevieve, Jan. 3.  
 S. George, Apr. 23.  
 B. Germaine Cousin, June 15.  
 S. Germanus, Sept. 24.  
 S. Gertrude, Nov. 15.  
 S. Gilbert, Mar. 3.  
 B. Giles, June 20.  
 B. Giovanni Colombini, Aug. 1.  
 S. Gregory the Great, Mar. 12.  
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 S. Gregory Nazianzen, May 9.  
 S. Gregory of Nyssa, Apr. 26.  
 S. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Nov. 18.  
 S. Guthlake, July 28.  
 S. Guy of Anderlecht, Sept. 12.

H.

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 S. Henry, Emperor, Sept. 8.

B. Herman Joseph of Steinfeld, Apr. 7.  
 S. Hermenegild, Apr. 13.  
 S. Hilarion, Oct. 21.  
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 S. Hildegard, Sept. 17.  
 S. Hugh of Lincoln, Nov. 17.  
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 S. Hyacintha Mariscotti, Feb. 6.

I.

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 B. Ippolito Galantini, July 13.  
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 S. Isidore of Seville, April 4.  
 S. Isidore of Madrid, July 1.

J.

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 S. Jane Frances de Chantal, Aug. 21.  
 S. Jane of Valois, Mar. 11.  
 S. Januarius, Sept. 19.  
 S. Jerome, Sept. 30.  
 S. Jerome Emiliani, July 20.  
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 S. John the Baptist, June 24.  
 S. John Baptist of the Conception, Feb. 14.  
 V. John Baptist de la Salle, May 22.  
 B. John Berchmans, Aug. 13.  
 S. John of Beverley, Oct. 25.  
 B. John de Britto, Feb. 11.  
 S. John, Ev., Ap., Dec. 27.  
 S. John Calybite, Jan. 10.

S. John Cantius, Oct. 20.  
 S. John Capistran, Oct. 23.  
 S. John Chrysostom, Jan. 27.  
 S. John Climacus, Mar. 30.  
 S. John of the Cross, Nov. 24.  
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 S. John of Egypt, Mar. 27.  
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 B. John Leonardi, Dec. 24.  
 S. John of Matha, Feb. 8.  
 B. John Nepomucen, May  
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 S. John of S. Facundus, June  
 12.  
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 S. Joseph, Mar. 19.  
 S. Joseph Calasancius, Aug.  
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 S. Joseph of Cupertino, Sept.  
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 S. Joseph of Leonissa, Feb.  
 28.  
 S. Julian, Mar. 16.  
 S. Juliana Falconieri, June  
 19.  
 S. Justin, June 1.  
 V. Juvenal Ancina, Aug. 31.

## K.

S. Kentigern, Jan. 13.

## L.

S. Laurence, Aug. 10.  
 B. Laurence of Brindisi, July  
 7.  
 S. Laurence Giustiniani,  
 Sept. 5.  
 S. Leo the Great, Apr. 11.  
 S. Leonard of Port Maurice,  
 Nov. 25.

B. Lidwine, Apr. 14.  
 S. Louis, King, Aug. 25.  
 S. Louis Bertrand, Oct. 9.  
 S. Lucy, Dec. 13.  
 S. Luke, Evang., Oct. 18.  
 S. Lutgarde, Aug. 11.

## M.

S. Macarius of Alexandria,  
 Jan. 2.  
 S. Macrina, Dec. 19.  
 S. Malachi, Nov. 2.  
 S. Malchus, Oct. 26.  
 SS. Marcian and Nicander,  
 June 17.  
 S. Margaret of Cortona, Feb.  
 22.  
 B. Margaret Mary Alacoque,  
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 S. Margaret of Scotland,  
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 21.  
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29.  
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N.

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B. Nicholas of Flüe, Mar. 31.  
S. Nicholas of Tolentino,  
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SS. Nilus and Theodulus,  
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O.

S. Odo of Canterbury, Sept.  
1.  
S. Odo of Cluny, Dec. 18.  
S. Osmund of Salisbury,  
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S. Oswald, B., Feb. 29.  
S. Oswald, K.M., Aug. 5.  
S. Oswin, Nov. 21.

P.

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S. Patrick, Mar. 17.  
S. Pambo, Nov. 6.  
S. Paschal Baylon, May 17.  
S. Paul, Ap., June 30.  
S. Paul of the Cross, Apr. 28.  
S. Paul, 1st Hermit, Jan. 15.  
SS. Paul, John, and James,  
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19.

S. Peter Balsam, Jan. 6.  
B. Peter Canisius, June 25.  
S. Peter Celestine, July 10.  
S. Peter Chrysologus, Dec.

4.

B. Peter Claver, Sept. 9.  
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May 15.  
B. Peter Favre, Aug. 8.  
B. Peter Fourier, Dec. 9.  
S. Peter Gonzalez, Apr. 15.  
S. Peter of Luxemburg, July

5.

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S. Peter Nolasco, Jan. 31.  
S. Philip Benizi, Aug. 23.  
SS. Philip and James, App.,  
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S. Phocas, Aug. 29.  
S. Pior, Solitary, Aug. 14.  
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S. Poemen, Aug. 9.  
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S. Porphyry, Feb. 26.  
S. Potamiana, June 28.

R.

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24.  
S. Raymund of Pennafort,  
Jan. 23.

S. Remigius, Oct. 1.  
 S. Richard of Chichester,  
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 S. Robert of Molesme, June  
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 S. Robert of Newminster,  
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 S. Romuald, Feb. 7.  
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 S. Rose of Viterbo, Sept. 4.

## S.

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 S. Saturninus, Nov. 29.  
 S. Scholastica, Feb. 10.  
 S. Sebastian, M., Jan. 20.  
 B. Sebastian Valfré, Jan. 30.  
 B. Silvanus, Dec. 12.  
 S. Simeon Stylites, Jan. 5.  
 SS. Simon and Jude, App.,  
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 26.  
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## T.

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 3.  
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## U.

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## V.

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 S. Wereburga, Feb. 3.  
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 S. William of York, June 8.  
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THE END.

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